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THE
THRESHOLD OF THE
SANCTUARY

BEING

*SHORT CHAPTERS ON PREPARATION FOR
HOLY ORDERS*

BY

B. W. RANDOLPH, M.A.

PRINCIPAL OF ELY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

HON. CANON OF ELY

EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN

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TO
MY SPIRITUAL FATHER
EDWARD
BISHOP OF LINCOLN
WHOSE FORBEARANCE, KINDNESS, AND LOVE
DURING THE LAST EIGHTEEN YEARS
HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE GREATEST
BLESSINGS OF MY LIFE

PREFACE

THE writer of this little volume has long felt the need of some book of the kind to put into the hands of young men who are thinking of being ordained. It is true, indeed, that in recent years a number of books, (some of them very valuable and suggestive), bearing on the Ministry, have issued from the press ; but these have dealt almost exclusively with the external aspect of the life and work of a priest. The present volume addresses itself, for the most part, to the inner aspect of the pastoral and ministerial life.

The writer feels that, in the present day, amid the bustle and "the barrenness of busy life," there is danger lest the fundamental principle that God claims us and our character before He asks for our work, should be somewhat obscured ; a danger lest the attention given to "practical work"—

teaching, preaching, organizing, the external side of the priestly life—should overshadow that deepening and strengthening of the character, that formation of a disciplined and prayerful habit of life, that steady development of the spirit of docility, reverence, and love, without which to engage in the manifold activities of parochial life is so precarious an enterprise.

Language is sometimes used which would seem to imply that a man can prepare for Ordination much in the same way as a mechanic learns his trade. Now, while practice in the external work of a clergyman—to that limited extent to which a layman may engage upon it—is often experimentally of very considerable value; yet it may be questioned whether such work should not be regarded, not so much itself a preparation for Holy Orders, as an opportunity for a young man to learn how great is the need for a time of careful and silent preparation—a time in which the character may be deepened and strengthened, before he can, without rashness, embark upon that most delicate and difficult work, the training and guidance of souls.

It is not, indeed, presumed that such a

volume as the present can adequately supply all that is wanted in the direction here indicated; but it is humbly hoped that it may be of some little use in that way. In any case, if anything that is written here should lead any one to think more seriously of, and to prepare more thoroughly for, Ordination, the object of its publication will have been attained.

The writer gladly avails himself of this opportunity of thanking the Rev. H. V. S. Eck (who was for more than five years his colleague as Vice-Principal of this College), for some valuable suggestions; and also the Rev. F. W. Hutchinson and the Rev. A. H. O. McCheane (his present colleagues), for correcting the proof-sheets.

B. W. R.

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE, ELY,
Feast of the Name of Jesus, 1897.

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VOCATION.

Qui ad statum clericalem anhelant, ante omnia perpendere debent, num ad illum statum a Deo sint vocati.

J. SCHNEIDER.

CHAPTER I.

VOCATION.

“No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”—HEB. v. 4.

NO one can speak authoritatively for God unless he has had a real call. We are perhaps too much inclined to look upon the “call” to the Priesthood as merely a way of speaking, whereas it is in truth a great reality.

St. Mark tells us that when our Lord chose His twelve Apostles He went up into a mountain and “callesth unto Him whom He *Himself* would;”¹ and in her Ordinations to-day the Church employs language which carries the mind back to that great event. “Do you think that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . to the Ministry of the Church?” Such language can only mean that it is not enough

¹ St. Mark iii. 13, οὗς ἠθελεν αὐτός.

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for a man to feel that he has a liking for what he conceives to be the life of a clergyman, or that his friends wish him to be ordained, still less that he has a family living awaiting him, or that no other occupation has as yet presented itself. Unless his after-life is to be wholly a mistake, and proportionately unhappy, the candidate for Ordination must in the last resort humbly yet firmly believe that he is being really called to this great work—that Almighty God has, so to say, in His love and in His mercy, stooped down from heaven and whispered into his ear, and is really calling him with an altogether special vocation ; for it still remains true that “no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”¹

If it be asked, How can any one be sure that God’s call has really come to him ? the answer must be that this call comes to men in very various ways. As of old, so now : some He calls gradually, others suddenly ; some from early years, others in later life. There are some who from early boyhood have never thought of any other profession ; they cannot

¹ Heb. v. 4.

tell you why this has been so, or when the idea first presented itself to the mind. As far back as they can recollect they have thought of Ordination, and thought of it as the only possible future for them. To others the call has come very gradually. Many possibilities seemed open to them in early life ; at school they were quite undecided ; at college what was at first only a possibility, jostled about among other possibilities, has changed slowly but surely into a probability, and this again has deepened into a moral certainty which has in due time crystallized into a resolution, a conviction, a certainty—
“ Please God, I shall some day be ordained.”

The truth is, God deals with us very differently ; the example or advice of some friend has been the moving and immediate cause in one case ; in another the chance word of a comparative stranger ; in a third, some verse in the Bible, or even some phrase in a sermon, has marked the turning-point of life ; while to another the idea of a life of self-dedication has suddenly and unaccountably been borne in upon the soul with an irresistible force. As of old, so now : the Spirit moveth where He listeth, and

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whenever a boy or a man begins to realize something of the seriousness of life he may well ask himself, and ask himself often, and on his knees before God, "Am I meant to be ordained? Is He really calling me?"

And it is perhaps just at this point that we need to be on our guard. Ordinarily we shall hear men round about us, often our own relations among others, speaking of Ordination as merely a profession; they speak of it—of "going into the Church"—very much in the same way as they would speak of a man becoming a lawyer or a doctor; they look upon it as one of the various "openings" which lie before him in life.

Now, certainly Ordination is a "profession," but it is also much more; it is the surrender, the giving up of a man's whole life to God for the highest good of his fellow-men; it is a surrender to the special service of our Lord; it is a response to a distinct call.

It is sometimes said nowadays that there is nothing to "tempt" men to be ordained, that men of ability "go elsewhere," or there is so little to offer them in the Ministry; but if men are thinking of being ordained with a view to making a "good thing out of it,"

with a prospect of an easy-going and comfortable life amid attractive social surroundings, we need not regret that they do "go elsewhere," for vocation to the Ministry implies a surrender—a man gives himself up to God to be used in His service. It may indeed be that God may call him to high office, to responsible positions in His vineyard, but all this is in His hands; the motive which, in the last resort, brings us in Ordination to the feet of our Lord, should be the conviction that He is calling us to Himself, and that we desire at the bottom of our hearts, though conscious of our own weakness and sinfulness, to respond to His gracious call.

The questions, then, for one who is thinking of Ordination to ask himself are such as these: Is God moving my heart with a love for His service, with a zeal for souls, with real love for the souls for whom Christ died? Do I experience the beginnings of a desire to do good to others, to bring them to a knowledge of God, to spend and be spent in the worship of God and the service of men?

If so, there are signs of a true call. Do

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not put them aside. Ask constantly to be guided by God; ask advice from friends whom you can thoroughly trust. If God gives the inward call, He generally confirms it by shaping our outward circumstances; thus the outward and the inward indications of a call go hand in hand. Constantly, therefore, make acts of self-oblation, giving yourself to God for anything to which He may be calling you: "Show Thou me the way that I should walk in;" "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth;" "I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me."

We may then dwell on certain aspects of this call. Consider—

(a) Its mysteriousness. Why does God call me and not others? We shall often be filled with wonder at God's dealings with us. Why am I called, and others—far better fitted apparently than I for His service, far better men—left to pursue other lines of life?

"Saviour, what didst Thou find in me,
That Thou hast dealt so lovingly?"

These are questions which we can never answer. Why did He choose Jacob? why St. Paul? St. Paul, indeed, ever seems to have had before him the thought of the

mysteriousness of God's loving dealings with him ; as, for example, when he speaks of God "putting me into the Ministry ; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious : but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief ;"¹ or again, when writing to the Ephesians, the thought of the greatness of his vocation floods his soul and breaks out : "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."²

We cannot tell why God calls one and not another. Certainly He does not call us because of our own deserts, and, as in other cases, so often in the case of vocation, His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts.

(*b*) Its eternity. When did God's call begin ? Who shall say ? For each one whom He creates He has some special vocation ; and God, as St. Augustine says, is the Eternal Now : with Him is neither past nor future, and we were therefore all of us eternally in the mind of God. From eternity He thought of each one of us, and predestined

¹ 1 Tim. i. 12, 13.

² Eph. iii. 8.

us for some special vocation. "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."¹ Our birth was but a manifestation to the world of His eternal choice. And if, indeed, His call of us be to the Priesthood, we may take comfort and courage from the thought that eternity stretches both ways; if He has called us He will not leave us, but will carry us through life to the endless end beyond. "Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it."²

(c) Its comfort. St. Paul begins two of his Epistles by the words "called to be an Apostle!"³ He found rest and comfort in the thought of the reality of his call, and it is not otherwise with ourselves; we, too, must learn to rest upon God's call, to find in the thought of it rest and support, and comfort and encouragement. There are, indeed, joys in the Ministry of which the world never dreams—the wondrous joy of being able to help others to get further from sin and nearer to God; the joy of constant approach to Him

¹ Jer. xxxi. 3.

² 1 Thess. v. 24.

³ Rom. i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 1.

in prayer and sacrament ; the joy in the thought that God is really making use of us in His special service. Yet there are also, as in all great undertakings, days of darkness and disappointment ; there are burdens to bear such as others cannot experience ; there are very great demands made on heart and conscience in the "cure of souls ;" there is the constant pressure of the smallness of the visible results of any work that we undertake ; there is the thought that comes upon us with terrible distinctness from time to time : "Where are the nine?" In such times as these we may well fall back on the thought of God's call : "I undertook this work, O my God, because Thou in Thy love didst call me to do it ; and I know that Thou wilt uphold me in it."

If God is really calling us, it is certain that He will give us strength to face every difficulty with calmness.

THE ANSWER TO GOD'S
CALL.

Ecce ego : quia vocasti me.— I SAM. iii. 6.

CHAPTER II.

THE ANSWER TO GOD'S CALL.

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.”—ISA. vi. 8.

How gentle and full of love is God in His dealings with us men! He calls us, but He will not force us to respond. It is a great mark of His condescending love that He calls, and then is content to wait for man's reply. The truth is that He treats us as responsible moral agents; and when He calls He respects His own gift of free will: He waits.

“Why,” you may hear a child ask,¹ as it first realizes that there are wicked people in the world—“why does not God make everybody good, and keep them good? He is Almighty!” The answer, of course, is that,

¹ I am indebted for this illustration to the author of “Pastor Pastorum.”

had God made men good in this sense, He would not have made "persons" at all; He would have made puppets, or mechanical contrivances, which would be men only in appearance. Their goodness could not have implied any moral value; they would have been good only in the sense in which we call a watch which goes well good. Goodness in the moral sense necessitates free will and the power of choice; and when God made man He endowed him with the prerogative and faculty of free will. So man is man just because he is a real person who has the power to choose or to refuse.

God's calls are real. But so also must the response be real; and this response implies an energetic action of the will. It is not mere passive acquiescence or submission; rather, it is an active response of the moral being.

It was so with Abraham. "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house."¹ There was the call. "And he went out, not knowing whither he went."² There was the reply.

It was so with Samuel. "And the Lord

¹ Gen. xii. 1.

² Heb. xi. 8.

came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel;" and the reply came: "Speak; for Thy servant heareth."¹ It was a child's self-dedication to a lifelong service.

So with Isaiah, as from out of the courts of the Heavenly Temple came the cry of the Almighty, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" "Here am I; send me."

So with St. Paul. Even that blinding light, brighter than the midday sun, which cast him to the ground on his way to Damascus, did not force the perfect freedom of his will. "I was not disobedient," he says, "unto the heavenly vision,"² implying that he might have been.

So with the Apostles. "Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men."³ There was the call. "And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him." There was the response.

So with her to whom came the greatest call, beyond comparison, ever addressed to a creature—called, as she was, to be the mother of the Eternal Son. "The Holy

¹ 1 Sam. iii. 10.

² Acts xxvi. 19.

³ St. Mark i. 17, 18.

Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." There was the call, while the Almighty waited for the responsive will of His own creature. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to Thy word."¹

Privileges, in God's dealings with us men, are always linked with responsibilities. The privilege of a call brings with it the responsibility of an answer.

It is good, then, for those who are looking forward to ordination, as well as for those on whom the burden of the Priesthood already rests, to reflect sometimes on the terrible fact that our Lord chose twelve Apostles, and Judas was one! Yes, there he is ; his terrible example written in letters of fire across the threshold of the Sanctuary, confronting us on the very steps of the altar as we celebrate the Holy Eucharist, and repeat the words, "Our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who, *in the same night that He was betrayed*, took Bread." Yes, there is Judas ; a warning—let us remember it—not to the thoroughly bad, but to the good. There he was, a man of administrative capacity—a "good business

¹ St. Luke i. 35, 38.

man," as we might say—the almoner of the Apostolic college; a good man, brought quite close to our Lord like the other Apostles, hearing Him day by day, seeing and watching His ways, called with a true vocation, yet answering not—at the last. From his example downwards through the stream of history, "the ministry of the Catholic Church" (they are the words of Bishop Woodford) "is a coast strewn with wrecks."¹

Certainly there is a danger of mistaking our vocation; but there is also a danger of not responding to a true one. Clerical scandals desolating the flock! Do they spring as often from a man having mistaken his vocation as from a failure to answer finally a true one?

On the other hand, then, we must beware lest, if God is really calling us to His special service, we decline through indolence, or despondency, or cowardice to rise up to His call. And, on the other hand, we must beware lest we "drift" into Holy Orders without due consideration.

From those whom God calls to His service

¹ "The Great Commission."

He looks for a reply, and a reply which will contain certain characteristic features.

(a) After (or including) penitence, of which we shall presently speak more fully, there will first of all be the note of *profound self-abasement*. As there can be no real progress in the Christian life except on the basis of constant efforts after humility, so, when God calls us to His special service, the first thing we have to do is to put ourselves in the dust at His feet.

Profound self-abasement. Who are we that we should be called to speak in God's Name to our fellow-men; to minister to others His gifts of grace; to come near to Him, representing and pleading for others before His throne?

Priestcraft and sacerdotalism! Why is it these words have such evil associations in the minds of so many? Is it not partly, at least, because men have used for their own selfish purposes, their own self-aggrandisement, the sense of a commission from the Most High which ought by rights to have humbled them in the dust with the thought of their own unworthiness?

Let us, then, be quite certain that if we

would in any adequate sense respond to God's call, we must needs make continuous efforts after humility in thought and action ; to strive after those special notes of a Christian character—poverty of spirit, detachment, meekness, and gentleness—“ casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”¹

(b) And then we need *purity of intention and motive*, sincerity of aim. We best respond to God's call by shaping our lives, in every department, with a single eye to His glory. “‘To the greater glory of God,’” it has been said, is “the motto of a Christian's life ; ‘to the greatest glory of God’ should be the motto of a priest's life ;” and we cannot begin too soon to do what we may to shake ourselves free of that dependence on the approbation of men to which many of us are naturally so prone. It is often a hard discipline to get rid of this bondage to the praise of men ; and yet consistent efforts at disinterestedness of purpose is a condition of all really faithful and effective work for God. “How

¹ 2 Cor. x. 5.

can ye believe," says our Lord, "which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?"¹ In moments of success, then, when men are ready to applaud and congratulate, we do well to remember the stern words of our Lord, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!"² and again, in times of apparent failure or disappointment, or when we have to encounter disapproving glances, or to run counter to current opinion in the discharge of unpopular duties, we may call to mind the words of St. Paul, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."³ The man who would be loyal to his Master must be prepared at times to make a stand against public feeling, as he strives increasingly to live with a single eye to God's glory, in close companionship with Him to Whose call he desires to answer, irrespective of the praise and blame of men.

(c) Once more, we shall need *perseverance*. In one sense the call is not simply an isolated fact; it comes to us again and again. So the answer is no isolated utterance, but implies a perpetual effort. It must therefore

¹ St. John v. 44.

² St. Luke vi. 26.

³ Gal. i. 10.

be able to bear the strain, the monotonous drudgery of daily life. We need the grace of final perseverance; and what is perseverance? Nothing else but the capacity of beginning again. How merciful are the changes which the all-wise God sends us in view of this duty of repeated effort! The round of the year, the recurrence of fast and festival, the night breaking into morning, the day fading into dusk,—all these are opportunities for fresh beginnings, and fresh beginnings mean perseverance. We have passed, let us say, a bad day—prayers hurried, meditation aimless, words unguarded, duties undone. Well, we can begin again, and do better to-morrow. “Now I begin to be a disciple,” was the saying of St. Ignatius on his way to martyrdom.

Only let us remember that the desire to improve must be ours. “No man is certain that he is good,” says St. Bernard, “who does not desire to be better; and where you begin to be unwilling to become better, there you begin to cease to be good.”

But, after all, it may be said that one word is enough in which to express our answer to God's call, and that word is “self-surrender.”

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Once let me realize that God is the End as well as the Author of my being, and that He has called me to His special service, then I give myself freely and unreservedly to Him, and I strive to train myself for His high service; I give myself to Him, and then to the work which He gives me, wherever it may be.

Ah! as I think of the long vista of the future which a merciful Providence shrouds from my sight—the possible trouble awaiting me, the sorrows, the bereavements, the sickness, the failures, the disappointments which He may in His inscrutable love see fit to send me, what will give me strength and courage but the thought of a complete and trustful dedication of myself to Him repeated day by day? Only when we have thus acquired the habit of giving ourselves to Him can we be said really to live; only when nothing is held back from Him do we know what real peace means. He calls me; I must needs reply, "Here am I; send me."¹ Then, and then alone, when I am daily training myself to make the response increasingly complete, shall I find full

¹ Isa. vi. 8.

satisfaction for all my moral being ; for nothing less than God can permanently satisfy the heart and mind of man.

*Fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te.*¹

¹ St. Augustine, "Confessions," i. 1.

THE PRIESTHOOD.

O Sacerdos, quid es tu?

Non es a te, quia de nihilo,
Non es ad te, quia mediator ad Deum,
Non es tibi, quia sponsus Ecclesiæ,
Non es tui, quia servus omnium,
Non es tu, quia Dei minister,
Quid es ergo?—nihil et omnia,

O Sacerdos.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRIESTHOOD.

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us : we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”—2 COR. v. 20.

To what is it that you are being called? To the Ministry of the Catholic Church, ultimately to the Priesthood. Let us ask then, What is the Priesthood? It is our Lord’s own appointed way of carrying on His work in the world; it is, indeed, the perpetuation of His own Ministry, prophetic, royal and priestly, among men; it is the work of bringing fallen man back again to God. The Priesthood is thus in the fullest and widest sense “the Ministry of reconciliation.” “God,” says St. Paul, “was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”¹

¹ 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.

Our work, then, as Priests is to bring men back to God. It pleases God, in the sphere of grace no less than in the sphere of nature, to give us His gifts through others. As in nature, though God made us, yet our life came to us through our parents ; so in grace our supernatural life, though it comes from God, comes through the instrumentality of others. This is the principle which underlies all the sacramental and sacerdotal system of the Church. The grace of Baptism—the gift of new life—comes, of course, from God ; yet it comes through the instrumentality of others. The grace of Confirmation comes from God, yet it comes to us through others. With the grace of Holy Orders it is the same ; and if you are ordained, God will be constantly using you to give supernatural gifts to others—*i.e.* God will give to others His gifts through you.

You are, then, beings called to this highest of all vocations, “to work together with God for the salvation of the souls of men.”¹ All the sacred ministrations will have this as their end—to bring men back again into union with God, or to bring them into

¹ Arvisenet, “*Memoriale Vitæ Sacerdotalis.*”

increasingly close communion with Him. The work in its manward aspect is partly missionary and partly pastoral. On the one hand it is missionary; it is "to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever."¹ On the other hand it is pastoral; it is "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."²

You will owe a duty, then, to those who are living in sin far away from God, and you will owe a duty to those who are living in a state of grace; partly the work is one of conversion, partly of edification; but in either case it has this for its supreme end—to bring to bear on men the reconciling and atoning work of our Lord, the work of reuniting men to God. All the sacred ministrations, whether in the sanctuary or out of it, will have this for their object. The Priest of Jesus Christ

¹ Ordination Service.

² Eph. iv. 12, 13.

looks out upon a fallen world, and realizes that he is placed where he is in order to glorify God by bringing those to whom he ministers into closer union with Him.

The thought may well inspire us at the outset with feelings of holy fear, of awe.

“Have always therefore printed in your remembrance,”—they are the solemn words of the Ordination Service—“how great a treasure is committed to your charge. For they are the sheep of Christ, which He bought with His death, and for whom He shed His blood.”

Let us beware, then, in the first place, of taking the great mysteries of the Catholic Faith too much for granted. We have grown up, it may be, in the midst of a traditional Christianity, and we have, many of us, received the Faith without any conscious intellectual or moral effort; if this in some respects is an advantage, in others assuredly it implies a danger—a danger lest we should fail to do justice to the central mysteries of the Faith, or lest we should fail to measure adequately the overwhelming nature of these great truths, or to apprehend what their acceptance means. Is it true that the Eternal God is the Author and End of my being? Is it true that the

only object for which I was born is that I might do His holy will? Is it true that He has, in the Person of the Eternal Son, taken our flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mother? Is it true that in that flesh He trod this earth for three and thirty years; that He was persecuted, and mocked, and spit upon, and nailed to the Cross; that He was buried, and rose again with the same Body; that He ascended into the highest heaven, and that He is there wearing our human nature on the throne of God; that He is for ever imparting the virtue of His risen life, His God-united, sinless humanity, to all His members, through the agency of the Holy Spirit energizing in the sacramental channels of His Church; that He is thus the Second Adam, in Whom humanity makes a fresh start as, by close and intimate contact with Himself, He gives those who receive Him "power to become the sons of God;"¹ that He is destined to come one day and summon all mankind before His unerring judgment-seat? "Yes, thank God," you say, "it is all true." But then reflect, if so, what facts can be compared to these facts? what discoveries

¹ St. John i. 12.

of science? Everything seems to dwindle into insignificance when compared with these unspeakable mysteries.

Now, it is this Faith which we go out to proclaim to men as the means of their salvation, as the means of their close approach to God here and hereafter. Let us remember, then, that in the Church of God we are everywhere surrounded by the "powers of the world to come;"¹ that nothing we do as ministers of so wondrous a dispensation can be insignificant or commonplace. Day by day I shall go in to "stand before God" as I repeat the prayers of the Church. Day by day, as I visit the sick and sorrowful, I shall find myself on that mysterious borderland which lies between the living and the dead. A child is brought to Holy Baptism; what a simple ceremony, but how vast a change passes over the unconscious infant as it becomes, through my instrumentality, incorporated into the Second Adam—"a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven!"²

Then, as the years pass you will be learning more and more of the "infinite pathos" of

¹ Heb. vi. 5.

² The Church Catechism.

human life, the deep sorrows, the overwhelming perplexities, the moral problems, the strange questionings, the weird contrasts, the terrible struggles. You will know what it is to have men coming to you for advice and comfort and encouragement. There is the less formal method of dealing with souls committed to our trust—the friendly intercourse as between friend and friend; and there is also—we must not forget it—the privilege offered to all in private confession which our Lord in His mercy has left in His Church, and of which we are the ministers and stewards. The solemn words said over us in the hour of ordination, “Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained,” will not be a dead letter, a solemn farce. There are other ways, doubtless, of exercising this part of our Ministry—sins are forgiven in Holy Baptism, and the public absolutions in Church are real and true—but, if we are faithful in our teaching, men will come to us for private confession; and we need preparation and prayer and watchfulness for the exercise of this part of our ministry. A tale of struggle and sin is poured into our ears from a “broken

and contrite heart," photographing, it may be, our own miserable experience in bygone years. A few words of advice, a few more of absolution and benediction, and the angels rejoice over a soul washed anew in the Blood of the Redeemer. Or—"highest and most characteristic act of a priest"¹—we ascend to the altar to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. A few more words, and the simple elements become, by the power of the Holy Ghost and in an ineffable way which transcends the apprehension of every faculty save that of faith, the Body and Blood of our Lord. Everywhere and on all sides we are touching mysteries which pass altogether beyond our comprehension, even as they are a constant reminder of our own utter unworthiness. We must go about the world, then, with a great reverence for human life, and as men to whom the great realities of religion are of the first importance; and we do well to ask ourselves at the outset, "Have I, am I beginning to have the spirit of holy fear?" No room here for flippant conversation on really sacred subjects! At the threshold of the Sanctuary. in the act of my self-dedication, in the still

¹ The phrase is Dr. Liddon's.

hours of my time of preparation, a voice calls to me from out the sanctuary, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." ¹

And as we must reflect often, both before and after Ordination, "into how high a dignity, and to how weighty an Office and Charge we are called . . . to be Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord," so must we beware, too, lest we narrow down our conception of the priestly office. A study of the Ordination Services, whether of the ancient Church or of our own, as well as the Patristic treatise on the sacred Ministry, will, on the contrary, teach us to take a wide view of our duties and responsibilities. We are pastors as well as priests, we are teachers as well as "ecclesiastics," we are men as well as clergymen; we have responsibilities towards the rich as well as to the poor, to our brethren in the Ministry as well as to the laity. Do not take a one-sided view of this great office; do not divorce its prophetic and pastoral aspect from its sacerdotal aspect. Because we understand better than our immediate forerunners the place of the Sacraments

¹ Exod. iii. 5.

38 *The Threshold of the Sanctuary.*

in the Christian scheme, why should we disparage preaching? Because we understand the importance of public worship, why should we neglect house to house visitation? Because we realize that the Holy Eucharist is *the* Christian service, why should we look upon Mattins and Evensong as of no account? Because we mean to be true to Catholic principles, why should we ride roughshod over the feelings and prejudices of others, and neglect to strive to "commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God"?¹ Because we are to "banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word,"² why should we forget that other promise, "to maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in us, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people, and especially among them that are committed to our charge?"

If we could but remember the old saying, "Sacerdos alter Christus," we should be learning to fix our eyes more and more steadily upon the example of Him, in Whose Priesthood we share; and we should remember, when tempted to self-importance, or pride,

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 2.

² Ordination Service.

or "sacerdotalism" in the false sense of the word, that the great High Priest came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."¹ The more we rightly apprehend the great dignity of the priestly life, the more we shall be ready to adore the goodness of God, who deigns to make use of us—inadequate, unworthy, sin-stained as we are—for so great and blessed a work.

"Is not God alone the Father of spirits? Are not souls the purchase of Jesus Christ? What angel in heaven could have said to man, as our Lord did unto Peter, 'Feed my sheep; preach; baptize; do this in remembrance of Me; whose sins ye retain they are retained, and their offences in heaven pardoned whose faults you shall on earth forgive'? What think ye? Are these terrestrial sounds, or else are they voices uttered out of the clouds above?"

"The power of the Ministry of God translateth out of darkness into glory; it raiseth men from the earth, and bringeth God Himself down from heaven; by blessing visible elements it maketh them invisible grace, it

¹ Mark x. 45.

giveth daily the Holy Ghost, it hath to dispose of that Flesh which was given for the life of the world, and that Blood which was poured out to redeem souls; when it poureth malediction upon the heads of the wicked, they perish; when it revoketh the same, they revive. O wretched blindness, if we admire not so great power, more wretched if we consider it aright and notwithstanding imagine that any but God could bestow it!"¹

¹ Hooker, E. P. V., 77, 1.

A THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE.

Tu vero, frater carissime ! Seminarium lætus ingredi
tamquam locum gratiæ et benedictionis ; ibi dicetur tibi,
quod te oporteat facere, ut Dominus ponat super te Spiritum
Suum, ut te sanctifices, ut eruditione ac virtute ad sacrum
ministerium digne te prepares.—J. SCHNEIDER.

CHAPTER IV.

A THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE.

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels.”—MAL. iii. 16, 17.

AFTER the thought of Ordination, when you are reasonably sure that Almighty God means you to be ordained, it is natural—almost inevitable—that you should think of going to a Theological College, and this whether you have taken a degree or not. In the latter case such a course is indispensable; you cannot, save under very exceptional circumstances, be ordained without it. In the former case it is, to say the least of it, most desirable, and recent statistics appear to have made it clear that at present, of the graduate candidates who are ordained,

one half avail themselves of a course at some Theological College.

The reasonableness of taking such a step would seem to be obvious. Into what other profession can men enter without some special training? If you think of entering the army, you must go to Sandhurst or Woolwich. If you join the navy, you must go through a course of special preparation. It is the same in all other lines of life. If you wish to be efficient, you must go through the discipline of learning all you can beforehand about the special work to which you aspire to devote your life. That this should be so would seem to be as obvious as the truth that the first step towards acquiring an accurate knowledge of a foreign language is to study the grammar. It is strange, therefore—almost unaccountable—that the highest of all professions—the Ministry—should have been thought at our time to be an exception to this rule. Men have acted as if theological and religious knowledge was acquired by intuition, and that for the Priesthood no special discipline of character is needed. Indeed, it has been one of the great weaknesses of the Church of England—a weakness

which, alas! we have by no means altogether outgrown—that men at Oxford and Cambridge, as well as elsewhere, have passed straight from the “cricket-fields and the river to the altars of the Church of God.” Yet who could seriously contend that the Universities, however highly we value all they do for us, are, or have for a long time been, places where men could adequately be trained for the work of clergymen?

It is, indeed, still sometimes maintained that Theological Colleges have a “narrowing” tendency on those who are educated in them; but what does this allegation really amount to? Mainly, that a man acquires at an institution of this kind a knowledge of and a love for his profession, which it would be difficult to get anywhere else. A real enthusiasm for the work which lies before him in life is generated or stimulated, and a man leaves a Theological College determined, by God’s grace, “to apply himself wholly to this one thing.”¹ It is the same, *mutatis mutandis*, with the army, the navy, medicine, the bar. The special training required in each case gives a man an insight into his profession. He learns

¹ Ordination Service.

its methods and details ; he absorbs its spirit ; he becomes increasingly conversant with its inner life, so to speak ; he grows more and more enthusiastic and whole-hearted in giving himself up to it. A soldier, if he is a real soldier, is wholly a soldier : he is fully alive to the greatness of his profession ; he sees what it may do for his own character, and what he may do in it for his country ; he knows its history—the long record of heroic and unselfish deeds, the stories of endurance and courage, of self-discipline, of devotion to duty, of singleness of purpose and simplicity of life ; and he is keenly alive to the responsibility which “the service” puts upon him ;—he becomes, in fact, a thorough soldier, and we do not wish him to be anything else.

It is not otherwise with the special preparation for the Ministry ; at a Theological College a man learns more than he could elsewhere of the real meaning of the Ministry—its work, its joys, its trials, its responsibilities. It is his great opportunity for looking well in front of him, for sitting down and counting the cost before he embarks on so great a venture as the cure of souls, for testing his vocation, for making sure of his ground. If

he has a real vocation to the Priesthood, then his sense of it is immeasurably deepened in the quiet seclusion which such a place affords ; he gets increasingly to realize what it means to be a clergyman. The Ministry of Jesus Christ has had its heroes in every age ; and as the theological student looks back at its long line of saints and martyrs, his imagination is fired and his heart glows and his will is invigorated to rise up to the greatness of his calling ; he looks forward to the joy and privilege of being joined by the gift of Ordination to those who in each successive century have, in the deepest and truest sense, " magnified their office ;" he makes up his mind, in a word, that if it is worth while to be a priest, he will give himself wholly to the work—he will be a thorough priest. If this is a " narrowing " effect, we may well be thankful for it ; for it means that the clergy are giving themselves up with more self-devotion to their work, and with a more intelligent appreciation of what the Ministry really is.

We may look a little closer at this matter, and inquire what a Theological College does for a man in the intellectual and moral sphere.

In regard, first, to the intellectual sphere, it may be said at once that a Theological College is not a cramming institution for passing Bishops' examinations. The lecture-list is, of course, framed, as far as possible, with a view of meeting the requirements of the Bishops ; and this has become a more simple matter since all the English Bishops have practically agreed to adopt the same subjects. But the main thing that has to be learnt is that there is a coherent body of revealed truth which we clergy are commissioned to teach ; that Christian theology is not a series of detached truths or propositions, but is a coherent whole, whose various parts are intimately related to one another ; that if God has really spoken to man, reverence and prudence would alike suggest that we ought to find out as well as we can what exactly He has said. We have then to study the fundamental doctrines of the Faith—the ever - blessed Trinity, the Incarnation of the Eternal Son, His atoning work for us men, the Person and Procession of the Holy Spirit, His mission in time, the Sacramental channels of communication between God and man, the meaning of Justification, of the Church as the storehouse of

Divine grace and the home of truth. We have to see how all these truths hang together as one consistent body of doctrine. Why is it that we find so few Churchpeople who know why they are Churchmen and why they are not Dissenters ; so comparatively few who are able to render an adequate reason for the hope that is in them ; such ignorance as to the true nature of repentance and pardon ; such incomplete appreciation of the Sacraments ? Who will doubt that one reason, at least, is that the clergy have not mastered these questions themselves ? What can be expected of sermons which are mere exhortations or moral essays, of instructions to Confirmation candidates which are inaccurate or invertebrate ; of language on the Sacraments which is little else than negative or vague ? “ Like priest, like people.” Conspicuous ignorance of the Prayer-book and of the obligations taken with regard to it at Ordination can perhaps alone account for the deplorable spectacle—still not as uncommon as it ought to be—of churches shut from Sunday to Sunday, of infrequent celebrations of the Holy Eucharist. These are signs of what has been lost to the Church by the neglect of some period of

special training, where knowledge which might technically be called "professional" can be acquired.

But it is when we turn to the moral and spiritual side of the question that we can best learn what a Theological College may do for a man.

"Teachers of language," it has been said, "teachers of the natural sciences, teachers of pure mathematics, say what they have to say, ascertain whether what they have said is understood by their pupils; and then everything is over."¹ But with theology it is wholly different. Theological and religious truth addresses itself to the moral sense no less than to the intellect. If we would understand God's Revelation of Himself to any real purpose we must begin by fearing Him. Thus the Decalogue and the Creed go hand in hand. You cannot safely divorce morals and doctrine. If you do not fear God, and are not seeking to sound the depths of your own sinfulness and of His goodness, what meaning can the doctrines of redemption and grace have for you? "If a man

¹ Dr. Liddon, sermon on "The Model Groundwork of Clerical Training."

would teach the power of religious truth, he must personally have felt the need of it. And this can only be felt in the secret depths of the moral being, when conscience has been aroused to a sensitiveness which is often and most wholesomely not less than agony; when the strength of habit, old and bad, and the weakness of resolution, good and recent, has been fully appreciated; when men have recognized the simple justice of that solemn sentence of Scripture, that the heart—that is, the centre-point of moral activity in man—is, when man is left to himself, ‘deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.’ Until language such as this is real to a man expressing . . . what he knows and sees to be experimentally true, the atoning work and eternal Person of Christ our Lord, and all the varied and blessed consequences of these facts in the Church and in the soul, must belong to the region of phrase and shadow. Their reality is felt increasingly, as the moral life of the soul becomes more sensitive and strong.”¹

The aim, then, of a Theological College is to

¹ Dr. Liddon, “The Moral Groundwork of Clerical Training.”

deepen and strengthen the moral character, as well as to teach the truth ; to get men to lay deep and strong in penitence the foundation of their character. It is a place of retirement, where they can fit themselves by discipline and training for the difficult and responsible work of teaching and feeding souls.

The regular hours for prayer, study, meditation, exercise, will teach a man what it means to "dispose of, and to lay out life from first to last under the eye of Christ." The whole system of the place, and still more its tone and atmosphere, will teach him an ideal of life which he will have opportunities while he is there of carrying out, and which, when he has left the College, he will be able to reach out to in after-life as far as his circumstances allow.

To form character, to brace and strengthen the moral life, to teach men the value of a life by rule, to inspire them with high ideals and lofty enthusiasms, to illustrate the joy and happiness of a life really given to God,—all this is the work of a Theological College ; and all this goes hand in hand with the systematic and definite teaching of the Catholic Faith, till at last "the passion for goodness

and loyalty to the Faith blend into a whole which absorbs and governs the whole moral being; each pulsation of moral enthusiasm throwing the soul upon revealed doctrine, each perception of dogmatic truth increasing the volume of the soul's moral force." ¹

Why is it that so often in after-life men look back to the time spent at a Theological College as one of the happiest—perhaps the happiest—year of their lives? Why is it that from the turmoil of a busy parish the heart so often turns to it with tender and affectionate interest, analogous to that we feel for our own homes?

Is it not because there they found a veritable home—a home of training and discipline, fitting them for their future work; a home where they first learnt what it meant to surrender their lives to God, where they learnt more and more to realize something of the true significance of life and death, the true meaning of the fall of man, and the terrible havoc which it has wrought in our poor human nature, and the consequent need of applying to the souls of men the gracious

¹ Dr. Liddon, "The Moral Groundwork of Clerical Training."

remedies of redemptive love? Is it not because they there had the will braced, the affections purified, as well as the intellect quickened, as on their knees they pondered again and again the great mysteries of the Christian Faith? Is it not because there they came to understand and to appreciate the value of friendships, the most close and most disinterested because based upon a unity of conviction in regard to those things which most nearly concern the soul? Is it not because there they realized, in a way apprehended but slightly before, the gladness and buoyancy of the Christian life (let outward circumstances be what they may), as in the gladness of social intercourse with friends and teachers alike, "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another"? Is it not because there they sought with sincerity of purpose and singleness of heart to prepare themselves for spending themselves, and whatever gifts God had given them, upon our Lord Himself in the persons of His brethren?

REPENTANCE.

Facies et labrum æneum cum basi sua ad lavandum. . . .
Et missa aqua, Lavabunt in ea Aaron et filii eius manus suas
ac pedes.—EX. xxx. 18, 19.

CHAPTER V.

REPENTANCE.

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper : but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”—PROV. xxviii. 13.

THE first step towards disciplining one's self is to know one's self as thoroughly as one can, and self-knowledge is not an easy thing to acquire. It needs patience, effort, watchfulness, and prayer. But directly we really begin to know ourselves in any true sense we become conscious of our sinfulness and our unworthiness, we know something of what our condition is in the eyes of an All-Holy God, and in view of Ordination we cry out with the prophet, “Woe is me ! because I am a man of unclean lips.”¹

The first real step, therefore, in self-discipline is Repentance. We are to preach repentance to others ; we must first of all,

¹ Isa. vi. 5.

then, be penitents ourselves. And what is repentance?

It consists of three parts: (1) Contrition, (2) Confession, (3) Amendment.

(1) Contrition is sorrow for sin for the love of God. We loathe ourselves for the way in which we have treated God in all our past lives—God Who has done what He has for us in the Incarnation and on the Cross. This sense of the conviction of sin may come to us gradually as we continue our preparation for the Priesthood, or it may have been flashed upon us suddenly in an instant. In either case it is the work of God the Holy Spirit, Whose office it is to “convince the world of sin;” and if we are really in earnest we recognize the importance of making an entirely fresh start after a searching examination of our past lives.

Assisted, then, by whatever manual we may have at hand, we make investigation of the past by the “rule of God’s commandments;” and we pray to hate sin more and more, and to love God with all the heart, with all the mind, with all the soul, and with all the strength; and this leads naturally to—

(2) Confession. Confession of some sort

there must be. We must acknowledge our transgressions to God, and we may make use, if we will, and if conscience urges it we ought, of private confession to a priest.

If we have not studied this matter before, now is our time for doing so. Take the Prayer-book, and make sure that this is part of the discipline allowed and practised in the Church of England.

There is the clear invitation which is found in the first Exhortation in the Communion Service addressed to those who, having done what they can to quiet their own consciences, still desire further help: "Let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God's Word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God's Holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness." There is the plain direction in the Service for the Visitation of the Sick, that the priest is to move the sick person "to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter;" and the form of absolution to be used after such a

confession is as clear and precise as any in Christendom—

“Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences: And by His authority committed unto me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

There is the form of Ordination in the Service for the Ordering of Priests: “Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God. . . . Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.”

The Canons of 1603 carefully guard the seal of confession. Canon 113 is not, indeed, on the subject of confession: its evidence, therefore, being incidental, is the stronger. The subject of the canon is Discipline; and it provides that if the churchwardens or others would not make presentments to the Bishop of “such enormities as are apparent in the parish,” the clergy of the parish might do so. But an exception is made of any crime known

through confession. "Provided always, that if any man confess his secret and hidden sins to the minister, for the unburdening of his conscience, and to receive spiritual consolation and ease of mind from him, we do not anyway bind the said minister by this our constitution, but do straitly charge and admonish him that he do not at any time reveal and make known to any person whatsoever any crime or offence so committed to his trust and secrecy (except they be such crimes as by the laws of this realm his own life may be called into question for concealing the same), under pain of irregularity." ¹

Now, canons are not made without reference to existing practices; and "had it not been notorious at that time that confession was made to the parish priest, and that widely, such a provision would have been obviously absurd, and an occasion of ridicule." ²

But we are not left to conjecture in this matter. There are extant Visitation Articles

¹ Canon 113. The exception probably refers to high treason. "Pain of irregularity" is suspension from sacerdotal functions. "It is the greatest penalty, except degradation from his priesthood, to which possibly a clergyman can be subject to" (Heylin).

² Dr. Pusey.

of a succession of bishops during the seventeenth century, which contain questions to the churchwardens founded on this canon. Such Articles were issued by bishops who have been "held in reverence ever since for their learning and piety"—such as Andrews, Overall, Montague, Gunning, Wren.

Look at Bishop Overall's question in his Visitation Articles of 1619—

"Whether doth your minister, before the several times of the administration of the Lord's Supper, admonish and exhort his parishioners, if they have their conscience troubled and disquieted, to resort unto him, or to some other learned minister, and open his grief, that he may receive such ghostly comfort and counsel as his conscience may be relieved, and by the minister he may receive the benefit of absolution, to the quiet of his conscience and avoiding of scruple. And if any man confess his secret and hidden sins, be he sick or whole, to the minister, for the unburthening of his conscience, and receiving such spiritual consolation, doth or hath the said minister at any time revealed and made known to any person whomsoever any crime or offence so

committed to his trust, contrary to the 113th Canon?"¹

Further, it is notorious that a long succession of divines of great repute among us have, from the Reformation downwards, spoken highly of Confession. The list is a long one, and it contains the names of those who are reputed our greatest theologians.

Hooker, for example, tells us that "men thought it the safest way to disclose their secret faults, and to crave imposition of penance from them whom our Lord Jesus Christ hath left in His Church to be spiritual and ghostly physicians, the guides and pastors of redeemed souls, whose office doth not only consist in general persuasion to amendment of life, but also in private particular cure of diseased minds."²

So also George Herbert pictures the Parson "persuading to particular confession; and how necessary it is in some cases."

"In his visiting the sick or otherwise afflicted, he followeth the Church's counsel,

¹ Quoted in Gaume's "Advice on hearing Confession" (ed. by E. B. Pusey), preface, p. xlii.

² E. P. vi. 4, 7.

viz. in persuading them to particular confession ; labouring to make them understand the great good use of this ancient and pious ordinance, and how necessary it is in some cases." ¹

So Jeremy Taylor, in a book which is still one of the most popular of our devotional manuals : "Every true penitent is obliged to confess his sins, and to humble himself before God for ever. Confession of sins hath a special promise. In all which circumstances, because we may very much be helped, if we take in the assistance of a spiritual guide, therefore the Church of God in all ages hath commended, and in most ages enjoined, that we confess our sins and discover the state and condition of our souls to such a person, whom we or our superiors judge fit to help us in such needs." ²

This testimony from representative English divines might be almost indefinitely enlarged by quotations from Sanderson, Barrow, Pearson, and very many others ; but enough has been adduced to show that the use of private confession is a thorough Church of England

¹ "Country Parson : " "The Parson Comforting."

² "Holy Living."

practice, part, and a very important part, of our Catholic heritage, and it is wise, before Ordination, to give this subject the attention it deserves.¹

We shall have to teach people about Private Confession—that it is theirs if they like to use it, and if conscience urges them to it. Certainly we have no right to compel lads to come to Confession, or to make it a *sine quâ non* before we present them to the bishop for Confirmation. To do this is clearly to go beyond what is written or implied in our Formularies. But, on the other hand, have we any right to let any one pass through our hands ignorant of this means of grace? Those who come under our instruction and influence ought surely to know that our Lord, in His mercy, has left this blessed means of grace in His Church, and that each one

¹ "It would be interesting to know when and why this habit of going to confession dropped into desuetude. Before the Restoration, as well as after, the habitual use of confession seems to have been usual among those who were trying to lead religious lives. Jeremy Taylor, we know, acted as confessor to Evelyn, Bishop Gunning to Mrs. Godolphin, Bishop Morley to the Duchess of York, and Archbishop Sharp to Queen Anne."—Wakeman's "History of the Church of England," p. 407, note.

should ask himself from time to time, "Is it meant for me?"

We have, then, in this sense, to teach others about Private Confession; we must be prepared eventually to hear confessions. But if that is our clear duty to others, what is our duty in this matter to ourselves?

Ought we not to do all we can to perfect our own repentance? Ought we to leave any stone unturned to make our sorrow for the past as real and deep as possible?

If we are to tell our people faithfully about Private Confession, and to recommend it to them in certain cases, should we not think very seriously whether we are not called upon to go through this humiliation and discipline ourselves?

In any case, there it stands in the Prayer-book. Why is it so many have grown up in the bosom of the Church of England and have scarcely ever heard of it? How many have said, after their first confession, "Why was I not told of this before—before I went to my first school; before I was confirmed; before I committed my first grievous sin, which has clung about me ever since? Why was I not told?"

Why indeed? Anyhow, it is not the Church's fault.

Let us see to it that when we are ordained none of those whom we instruct shall be able to turn round upon us at the last and to say, "You never told me about this!"

(3) The third part of Repentance is Amendment. This implies taking real pains with ourselves.

We are not to treat our characters in a haphazard sort of way; but, having discovered and confessed our failings, having found out our weak points, we are to wage constant warfare, not only against sin in general, but in particular against our special temptations. Temptation is a necessary part of the Christian life, and is meant to try and test our characters; and there is no period of life in which we may expect to be free from it. As long as life lasts we shall be liable to temptation. The final test, therefore, is endurance.

Again and again we shall have to come back to God, again and again to lay the foundations of our moral and spiritual life in the rock-bed of penitence and self-abasement, in a profound desire to be humble.

68 *The Threshold of the Sanctuary.*

And we must not be weary in doing this ; for all the Saints teach us that dissatisfaction with self is a necessary condition of real advancement.

“Let us now begin to serve God in real earnest, for as yet we have done nothing,” was a frequent saying of St. Francis of Assisi.

PRAYER.

Summæ dignitatis est, hominem, qui pulvis et cinis est, cum Deo colloqui, atque ad Ipsum quovis loco ac tempore liberum habere aditum, Illique omnes angustias animi tuto exponere atque aperire.—J. SCHNEIDER.

CHAPTER VI.

PRAYER.

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.”—
EPH. vi. 18.

WHEN our Lord called the Apostles, He did not send them out all at once, but He called them *to* Himself, “that they should be *with* Him.”¹ He desired, that is, that they should be for a while in constant intercourse and communion with Himself; that their eyes might see, their ears might hear, their hands might handle the Eternal Word of God; that day by day they might watch His methods, drink in His Spirit, experience His tenderness and strength, His humility and courage, before they ventured forth to speak to others in His Name.

Certainly we cannot adequately realize all

¹ St. Mark iii. 14.

that that close companionship with the Incarnate Son was to the Apostles—that ineffable privilege, to see God Incarnate walk this earth! But we can understand that to give them this time for quiet retirement and preparation for their future work was in harmony with all God's dealings with those whom He selects for His special service. We are impatient—it may well be, sometimes—to begin the work of life; we do not like the prospect of delay. It is a generous and noble feeling; but look, now, in one case after another it has been God's way to prepare men quietly, and often very gradually, for the work of life.

He sends Moses into a forty-years' retreat in the wilderness, that the impetuous man of early middle life may be gradually matured into the courageous, yet meek, leader of His people.

St. John the Baptist was in the solitude of the desert, "learning to do hard things," until the "day of his shewing unto Israel."

St. Paul retired for three years into Arabia. And in the case of our Lord Himself, there is after His infancy, but one recorded incident which breaks the solemn silence of the first thirty years of His earthly life. Reflect upon

the significance of this—thirty years' silence and three years' work!

Is it not true, then, that Almighty God seems to suggest, if He does not command, to His messengers a breathing space, a pause, a quiet time, before they go forth on their errand?

A moment's reflection will, indeed, show us why this is so. Whatever we are allowed to do in life must be the outcome of what we *are*; it is character which is of paramount importance, and character is matured in quietness and solitude, though it be trained and disciplined afterwards in the hard warfare of active life. If your character is to be solid and true, you must secure a time for quietness and secret growth every day. Only by this means will you escape the danger of being superficial or unreal or weak in your Ministry—easily swayed by popular applause, easily cast down by apparent failure. The oak tree flings its branches aloft in proud luxuriance; it stands vigorous and strong against the fury of the storm. But why? Because there has been work going on below; in silent retirement, below the earth's surface, its roots have spread deep and wide. This phenomenon illustrates

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a law which is "writ large" in the natural order, and is, indeed, a parable of what we find in the moral and spiritual order.

True, without depth, without prayer and meditation and retirement, a man may for a time make a stir in the world; he may attract attention; he may be talked about; he may be asked to go here and there (and be thus constantly tempted to neglect his own work); he may become a "popular preacher;" but, if he has no solid foundation to his life and character, sooner or later he will fail. It is possible no less for an individual than for a Church to have, like Sardis, a name to live, and yet be dead. He may speak so that men shall exclaim, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man," and yet his spiritual life will be eaten of worms and die.

No; if there is to be anything permanently useful in a man's after life, his character will first of all want deepening. The Apostles were to be great indeed—the foundations and pillars of the Catholic Church—*therefore*, before they went forth to teach they were to be in close and constant communion with Him Whose messengers they were presently to be. Assuredly it is the same now; to do

real and lasting work in the Priesthood our characters must have depth, and depth in the moral and spiritual sphere is only gained by a serious cultivation of a devotional habit.

As you look out into the future, you will understand that it is no imaginary risk which we run. What is the complaint again and again of the hard-worked parish priest of the town? Simply this, that he has not time to attend to the needs of his own soul: "They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept."¹ In an age like ours this danger is not likely to decrease, and unless a man is thoroughly convinced that his own devotional life is of paramount importance, he will soon, when once his active work has begun, get carried away by the ever-increasing demands of his parish. Each day's activity must find its source and inspiration in prayer and meditation—in silent, deliberate, systematic communion with God. Priests are *angeli Domini*; and the angelic life is twofold—Godward and manward: the angels are "worshipping spirits sent forth to minister."²

Let us, then, reflect on the subject of

¹ Canticles i. 6. ² Heb. i. 14, *λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα*.

Prayer. We have to be "men of prayer." Here is our ideal: "Noah walked with God;" "Enoch walked with God;" Abraham was called the "Friend of God;" and whatever else we aim at, we must aim at this, to be "men of prayer." Whatever other high and unselfish ambitions we set before us, this must take the highest place—to be "men of prayer;" it is, in fact, the first requirement of the Ordinal: "Will you be diligent in Prayers?"

"Ye ought, and have need, to pray earnestly." If we lack the habit of prayer, whatever other gifts we have we cannot really be efficient priests. What, then, is prayer?

It is "speaking to God;" it is "the beginning of a communion which need never end."¹ It is our personality addressing God's Personality, and this means real work.

It is not merely "saying our prayers," but praying; we may have said our prayers this morning, but the question is, Did we really pray?

Reflect upon this, for it is sometimes quite late, comparatively, that we realize what it is to pray. "I learnt at ——— what prayer

¹ The phrase is the Bishop of Lincoln's.

was," a priest once said to the present writer. He had said prayers constantly before, but he was within a year of his Ordination, and at a Theological College, before he had really learnt what prayer is.

Really to pray, then, is a task to be learnt ; and there is only One who can teach us, and that is the Holy Spirit, who "helpeth our infirmities." It is a good thing, therefore, to say the "Veni Creator," or a part of it, or some other invocation of God the Holy Ghost, when we first place ourselves on our knees with a view to pray.

What further can be said which may be of some practical value ?

(*a*) Have a fixed time for prayer, morning and evening—a fixed time which we will give to God ; a fixed minimum of ten or fifteen minutes which we will not fall short of, but to which we may often add. It is easy to make such a resolution as this, but it means many a battle with indolence and sloth before we acquire the habit. If we once let the precious moments of the early morning go by, we do not easily recover them throughout the day. The first freshness of the early morning thus deliberately consecrated to

God gives a tone to the hours which are to follow. We have, most of us, probably got into the habit of saying our evening prayers the last thing at night ; but when active work has once begun, it is very doubtful whether this is a wise plan, for we shall often find ourselves too sleepy to give proper attention to the words we are saying ; self-examination is apt to be carelessly done, and the prayers more or less shortened. It is often a great gain, therefore, to say our evening prayers early—perhaps before the evening meal, leaving little or nothing to be added later but the simple act of committing ourselves to God before we lie down to sleep.

(*b*) We must enlarge our earlier prayers. The prayers of childhood will in most cases, doubtless, be the best foundation for our later prayers ; but we need to enlarge and readjust them from time to time, in order to meet the growing needs and the varying temptations of life. We have grown in other ways ; the horizon of our interests has widened out as our knowledge has increased year after year. We have grown in our knowledge of right and, alas ! in our knowledge

of wrong ; but how often have men failed to grow in their experiences of prayer ; how often have the devotions we learnt in childhood done duty through school and college life, till the saying of our prayers has become little better than the repetition of an empty formula ? The time, then, which you spend at a Theological College is a precious opportunity for readjusting the prayers of earlier life ; not discarding what we may have found useful, but adding, enriching, enlarging the heritage of bygone years, till we make our prayers bear more decidedly upon our own special character—its weak places and its besetting sins—on our hopes for the future, on the work which lies before us. Books of devotion are most useful if only we remember always to use the books, and “not let the books use us.” Most men will, after a time, find it well to make their own book of private devotions, which will consist largely of adaptations and extracts from some of the well-known manuals of prayer. After all, God does not want “fine words” in prayer. He listens to the secret aspirations of the soul ; He watches the real trend and bent of the will : “Thou preparest their heart, and

Thine ear hearkeneth thereto.”¹ “If I incline unto wickedness with mine heart: the Lord will not hear me.”² Let the heart and will, then, go out to Him, and ask Him to give you grace to hate sin—especially those sins to which you may be tempted—more and more, and to love God. You will remember how M. Vianney, the saintly curé of Ars, was answered by the old peasant, when the good priest inquired what he found to say to God during the long hours which he spent in Church—“I look at Him, and He looks at me.”

(c) Get into the habit of bringing everything before God in prayer. “Make it a subject of prayer,” a mother used to say to her child when the latter was in any trouble or perplexity; and it would be well if we all remembered this advice, and acted upon it more and more, for nothing is too small for God to take account of; and we may well bring not only our troubles to Him, but any matter which concerns us. Indeed, how else can we cultivate that habit of trustful intercourse with God, which is the mainstay of the Christian life?

¹ Psalm x. 19 (P.B.V.).

² Psalm lxvi. 16 (P.B.V.).

And we may go a step further, for we are to be priests—*Legati a latere Jesus Christi*: “Ambassadors from the side of Jesus Christ.” Think, then, what this implies. In the morning we shall come forth from Him to move amongst men; well, then, let us practise the “examination of prevision.” It was General Gordon’s habit to commend to God in the morning all persons—known or unknown—whom he was to meet that day; consequently he tells us that even those whom he had never seen before did not seem to be strangers when he met them, for he had seen them before “in God.” So we in our work may well do the same thing; we can commend to God in the early morning those whom we may meet during the day, especially those to whom we shall minister, and pray for His blessing on them, and also on ourselves in all the various duties of the day before we go forth—on our prayers and offices, on our meditation, on our study, our teaching in the schools, our pastoral visitations, our conversation, our meetings, our classes, our recreation, our meals,—all may have been definitely consecrated to Him before the day begins. And then at night, we, like the

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Apostles, return to our Lord with the "double column," to tell him ¹ (i) what we have done, and (ii) what we have taught ; and so we shall be gradually acquiring the habit of living and working under His eye, like George Herbert, who used, we are told, always to add the words "My Master" after the sacred Name of our Lord—"Jesus, my Master." It has, indeed, been beautifully pointed out how this kind of practice will help us to cultivate a sense of friendship with, and loyalty to, Him ; and will establish a relationship of love and service on our side, and of love and protection on His, as night by night we come back to Him and lay our burden, with its joys and sorrows, at His feet, certain of welcome, pardon, love, and benediction.

¹ The phrase is the Bishop of Lincoln's.

INTERCESSION.

Portabitque Aaron nomina filiorum Israel in rationali
judicii super pectus suum, quando ingreditur sanctuarium,
memoriale coram Domino in æternum.—EX. xxviii. 29.

CHAPTER VII.

INTERCESSION.

“Without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.”—ROM. i. 9.

WE have thought so far, primarily at least, of prayer for ourselves; but in truth, after we are ordained, prayer for others will occupy as large a portion of our time and thought as prayer for ourselves.

Whether ordained or not, it would be true to say that as our private prayers are naturally enlarged and enriched as life goes on, so also does the circle embraced by our intercessions widen out. But we must say more than this, for Intercession is nothing less than a primary duty of the Priesthood, and it involves systematic thought for others. There will therefore be the constant bringing before the Throne of God the names of individuals whom we are trying to help, or who seem

in a special way to be entrusted to our care. Now it is the diocese or the parish as a whole, now it is this or that district or street, now it is this or that individual soul for whom we plead, as the ebb and flow of our intercessions brings us again and again before the Throne of Grace.

We must, first of all, convince ourselves of the importance of this work, and then we can make some simple rules to help us in carrying it out.

The importance of it is clearly indicated in the Bible. "They watch for your souls, as they that must give account."¹ St. Paul's intercessions for his converts were continuous and importunate; and, indeed, to work for the souls entrusted to us, and at the same time not to pray for them, would seem to be great presumption. "The highest and most effectual work," it has been said, "is being done by the priest when he is commending his people to God." "Probably," another has said, "those to whom we are called and sent to minister will reap more benefit by prayer made daily to God by us for them, than they will do by our activities and our preaching." "God is

¹ Heb. xiii. 17.

more respective," says Bishop Cosin, quaintly, "to the prayers we make for the people, than ever the people are to the sermons we make for them."

As to practical rules, little can be said that will suit every one, but it is obvious that though intercessions will naturally and inevitably occupy no small part of our morning and evening devotions, yet we must be prepared to give a fixed time in the day—not in the evening, for we shall be too sleepy to do it effectively then—to the important work of intercessory prayer. Possibly the best time for very many is either before or after the Holy Eucharist, if there is a daily Celebration, or after our morning's meditation, or in connection with the office of Sext at midday. In any case five or ten minutes will be allotted to it at some time during the day, and we shall eventually make for ourselves a scheme of intercession for every day of the week.

We shall map out the parish, and make a portion of it each day the subject of our intercession: we shall never omit to pray for foreign missions and missionaries; then there are always special persons and special societies

or institutions to be remembered; then the sick and suffering; then those who help us directly or indirectly—servants, tradesmen, mechanics, railway men, printers, post and telegraph officials, the country labourers and the miners,—all those by whose constant labours are secured to us from hour to hour the necessaries and the “comforts” of life. No other prayers are so likely to help us as models in this matter as those of Bishop Andrewes, who prays again and again in his private devotions for whole classes of people whom we in our carelessness forget to think of.

A study of these devotions is little short of an education in what is meant by intercessory prayer. “There is no class of men,” says Dean Church, “no condition, no relation of life, no necessity or emergency of it, which does not at one time or another rise up before his memory and claim his intercession; none for whom he does not see a place in the order of God’s world, and find a refuge under the shadow of His wing.”¹ “He casts his mind,” says his latest biographer, “over the varied needs and perils of civilized society; the

¹ Church, “Masters in English Theology,” p. 104.

different classes of which it is composed, from the highest to the lowest ; the different estates and conditions of men, their mutual relations of dependence or service ; the great divisions of Christendom ; above all, the down-trodden, oppressed, forgotten individuals who are apt to be overlooked in a comprehensive survey of the mass.”¹ And Mr. Ottley quotes the following as “perhaps the most beautiful and tender passage in the entire manual :”—

“Remember, Lord,
infants, children, the grown, the young, the middle-aged,
the old,
hungry, thirsty, naked, and sick,
prisoners, foreigners, friendless, unburied,
all in extreme age and weakness,
possessed with devils and tempted to suicide, troubled by
unclean spirits,
the hopeless, the sick in soul or body, the weak-hearted,
all in prison and chains, all under sentence of death,
orphans, widows, foreigners, travellers, voyagers,
women with child, women who give suck,
all in bitter servitude, or mines, or galleys, or in loneliness.”²

These intercessions are indeed “models of the sacerdotal spirit,” and in some such way as Bishop Andrewes did, every priest will

¹ R. L. Ottley, “Lancelot Andrewes,” p. 188.

² First day.

endeavour to make his own list of intercessions; and this, of course, means taking trouble and time about our private prayers, just as we should do about any work which we regarded as of paramount importance.

But perhaps the thought may occur to some readers, "Is this possible in the midst of an active life?" The answer is that prayer is the only thing which makes an active life in the Ministry really safe, for it is prayer and communion with God which alone secures the depth and strength which is able to prevent our active life being, for all its activity, a barren one in the sight of God.

Bishop Andrewes was a busy man, and yet he spent five hours a day in devotion! Bishop Dupanloup, of Orleans, led a very active life, yet he spent four hours a day in devotion! The late Dean of Lincoln (Dr. Butler) was one of the most active and incessant workers of our time, yet he rose every morning, summer and winter, for fifty years at six o'clock, for the purpose of securing time for quiet communion with God.

But we may go immeasurably higher for an example. We may look at our Lord's life of unwearied activity, so unwearied that at times

He and His Apostles "had no leisure so much as to eat."¹ Well, then, consider such texts as these: "In the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."² "He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed."³ Or again, "He continued all night in prayer to God"⁴ before choosing His Apostles. Or again, after "a successful day," after the feeding of the five thousand, "when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone."⁵

We are, then, to be "men of prayer," and our Lord's example may satisfy us that we can, by His grace, combine a life of active service with a life of prayer.

On the other hand, we must not suppose that this is easy. It can only be done if we have convinced ourselves that our prayers, our meditations, our intercessions, are not a mere *παρέργον* with which we preface the

¹ St. Mark vi. 31.

² St. Mark i. 35.

³ St. Luke v. 16. The words seem to indicate His habitual practice.

⁴ St. Luke vi. 12.

⁵ St. Matt. xiv. 23.

real work of the day, but that they are themselves part, and even the most important part, of that work. Dr. Liddon tells us that it was a saying of the late Bishop Hamilton, of Salisbury, that "no man was likely to do much good in prayer who did not begin by looking upon it in the light of a work, to be prepared for and persevered in with all the earnestness which we bring to bear upon subjects which are, in our opinion, at once most interesting and most necessary."

"Pray without ceasing." "Continuing instant in prayer." These are hard sayings, for, in addition to stated times of prayer, they imply that we ought to be living in an atmosphere of prayer, striving after a spirit of recollectedness and a sense of the Presence of God, using ejaculatory prayer in times of temptation or provocation or disappointment. You will remember how Brother Lawrence tells us how he had, slowly and painfully, but at last successfully, trained himself to think of God when doing the commonest duties, and how he had thus at last found perfect peace and refreshment amid whatever outward distractions. Great is the power of a humble heart "which leans on God;" and we can only

“lean on God” by learning to be “men of prayer.” Let this, then, be your aim. It will not take the joy out of life—far from it. God will be with us in our hours of relaxation as well as in our hours of serious effort, but the hours of relaxation will thus be passed unstained by sin. “What would you do,” some one asked St. Charles Borromeo, when playing at chess—“what would you do if you were told that the Day of Judgment was at hand?” “I should finish the game,” was the reply. Certainly it was a reply which only a Saint could venture to give, but the principle which underlies it is common property. It is this: “I know that this recreation is what I require, is what God allows and desires for me; there is nothing in it, therefore, that I need regret.”

Once more, do not let us deceive ourselves; to acquire the habit of devotion is, for most of us, hard work. It implies a constant effort to master our lower selves, our tendencies to sloth and indolence and sensuality. It implies “a simple and strong desire to live for God.” But without it the life of a priest is in danger of becoming a wearisome routine of duties, many of which will be positively distasteful. With it everything falls into its proper place,

for the question will be not whether we are more or less religious, but whether we are making religion the real work of life.

We want in the Priesthood men of spiritual power. We cannot all be strong, we cannot all be intellectual, but we may all be men of spiritual power ; and spirituality is, after all, a great power in the world. An older generation in the Ministry has done much for us. It has given us, in parish after parish, at home and abroad, great examples of absolute integrity of character and unquestioned honesty of purpose. Let us be heartily grateful for so good a heritage ; but our countrymen of to-day—let us be sure of it—while they are asking for this same fundamental moral integrity, are asking for something more. They are asking for men of devoted lives, for men of spiritual power—men burning with zeal to bring souls to our Lord ; and we do well sometimes to remind ourselves that a man is no less a man because he is full of spiritual energy and power.

Dissent is losing its hold in England. Why ? Because it is losing its spiritual force. In proportion as it gets merely political, or social, or commercial, just in that

proportion it loses those who are really religious. In John Wesley's days men left the Church because they got spiritual help elsewhere. They will return—they are returning more and more—to the Church, because she is showing herself able to help them in their spiritual lives.

Our Lord chose His twelve Apostles first of all "that they should be with Him." So with us. Prayerfulness, retirement, and companionship with our Lord—that must be the real secret of all lasting work in the Priesthood.

THE DAILY OFFICE.

Et adolebit incensum super eo Aaron, suave fragrans,
mane. Quando componet lucernas, incendet illud.

Et quando collocabit eao ad vesperum, uret thymiana
sempiternum coram Domino in generationes vestras.

EXOD. xxx. 7, 8.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DAILY OFFICE.

“I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”—Isa. lxii. 6, 7.

IN addition to, or apart from, the prayers and intercessions which we may select or compile for our own use, there are certain fixed services which all the clergy are bound, under a solemn obligation, to use daily. Right away back from early times this obligation has come to us clergy of the English Church, the provision for its due observance becoming increasingly stringent with each successive revision of the Prayer-book, to say daily the “Morning and Evening Prayer.”

“All Priests and Deacons are to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer, either

privately or openly, not being let by sickness, or some other urgent cause."

So runs the rule as it stands in our present Prayer-book. Our duty, then, is absolutely clear; but we must be ready to meet objections. "What is the use," men will say, "of going to church when your people never come?" or, "I would have daily service, but I should not get a congregation"—as if the absence of the people was not rather an additional reason for the presence of the parish priest, at least twice daily in his church, to offer up praises to God, and to pray for his people, a vast majority of whom have not leisure to come, while he has!

There plainly and imperatively is the Church's order: "The Curate that ministereth in every Parish Church or Chapel, being at home, and not being otherwise reasonably hindered, shall say the same in the Parish Church or Chapel where he ministereth, and shall cause a bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the people may come to hear God's Word, and to pray with him."

Reflect what a difference there would have

been all over England in the spiritual life of the people if her parish priests had for the last two hundred years obeyed this simple and peremptory direction! Ah, if only the bell had rung out twice a day in every country parish, what an evidence it would have been for a robust belief in prayer and in another world! Would the people, do you think, be as indifferent to religious influences as they are now? Would the poor people in the villages think, as they too often now think, that the parson has no work to do except on Sundays?

What can be more beautiful than the picture which his biographer gives of George Herbert and his daily prayers? You will remember how he describes Mr. Herbert reading the prayers in the tiny church of Bemerton, close to Salisbury, and "how the poorer people of the Parish did so love and reverence Mr. Herbert that they would let their plough rest when Mr. Herbert's Saints' Bell rang to prayers, that they might also offer their devotions to God with him, and then would return back to their plough."

Why should not this have been the rule throughout England? One thing, at least,

is clear, that the Church herself is not responsible for houses of God locked from one Sunday to another.

Now, then, is the time to resolve not only to carry out the rule of the Church loyally when you are ordained, but also to do what you can to make the Offices of the Church real to you before Ordination. To say an office attentively and worthily is not at all easy; there is need of constant watchfulness if we would escape being perfunctory, or even irreverent. Really to worship God while we repeat the offices of the Church is little less than a task which we must set ourselves to learn. Let us remind ourselves, then, what an office really is, and why the clergy are bound to its recitation, whether they have a congregation round them or whether they are alone.

“Is it not,” it may be said, “unreal for a clergyman, when he is quite alone in church or in his study, to say, ‘The Lord be with you,’ and, ‘And with thy spirit’? or to say, ‘Let us pray’? Does not language like this presuppose a congregation?”

The answer is that, in the theory of the Church, the whole body of the faithful are

really present. In saying the service the individual minister remembers that he acts as the spokesman of the Body of Christ. If he is alone, it is only in appearance that he is so. In reality he is never less so, for the service which he is saying will not allow him to believe himself alone. "He is alternately priest and people; he confesses and he absolves; he addresses and he listens; he prays and he ratifies his own intercessions by the solemn 'Amen;' he sustains throughout a double capacity, and it is the Church's intention that he should do so. . . . The priest is never without a congregation, though it be far away, and have chosen an earlier or later hour than his own, or none at all. Like St. Paul, he is separated from it, in person only, not in spirit and reality; for men of all times and countries meet in Catholic communion before the Throne of God. . . . And therefore, so far from its being matter for surprise that the Daily Office of the solitary clergyman is the language not of an individual, but of a Church, it is almost inconceivable that the Church could ever have sanctioned a different arrangement, without weakening her sense of the truth that her

clergy pray not for themselves, but for and with her to whom they minister.”¹

“We are to remember,” says Bishop Cosin, “that we which are priests are called *angeli domini*; and it is the angel’s office, not only to descend to the people and teach them God’s will, but to ascend to the presence of God to make intercessions for the people, and to carry up the Daily Prayers of the Church in their behalf;”² and the precept which enjoins the use of the Daily Office is, he adds, “the most useful and necessary of any other that belongs to the minister of God.”³

“Go,” says the saintly Bishop Ken—“go to the house of prayer, though you go alone; and there, as you are God’s remembrancers, ‘keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.’”

The obligation of the clergy to recite the Daily Prayers of the Church is, indeed, nowadays, widely admitted, and we may be thankful that it is so. We shall not, however, do justice to this part of our duty until we have ceased to regard it merely in the light of an

¹ Liddon, “Priest in his Inner Life,” pp. 16, 17.

² Works, vol. v. p. 2.

³ Ibid. p. 9.

obligation. If it is an obligation, it is very much more ; it is nothing less than a very high privilege. To be obliged to be men of prayer, and yet to have no special prayers assigned us, and thus to be altogether left to our individual fancies and idiosyncracies, this would be both to priest and people a very real hardship, from which we are rescued by the rule we are considering.

It is, indeed, a very great blessing that in saying the Daily Prayers each clergyman may feel not only that he is repeating the same Office with his brethren of the Anglican communion throughout the world, but that substantially he is repeating the same prayers and praises which ascend to Almighty God day by day from the whole of Western Christendom ; for the Prayer-book is, after all, a selection and adaptation of the services of the Latin Breviary. Surely, then, here we are in possession of a great privilege. If there is a power in united prayer, we clergy who faithfully and attentively recite the service of the Church may legitimately hope to experience something of its blessing.

But, further, our own spiritual lives will be deepened by a faithful obedience to this rule.

What an enrichment may come to us from the repetition of the Psalter week by week! What endless adaptations do the Psalms prove themselves capable of, as they seem, year after year, to meet the needs of our individual lives! Who, indeed, has not experienced this, as again and again, it may be, with heavy or distracted hearts, we have gone into church, and come out again refreshed and strengthened by the familiar words?

How often have the Psalms helped us as a new meaning has been given to this or that verse by the light of God the Holy Spirit shining in our hearts! Or we may think of the grasp of Scripture which is gained by a thoughtful reading of the Lessons day by day. What stores of instruction we may be laying up for our people if before we read or listen to the Scriptures we dart up an ejaculatory prayer for guidance and help and illumination!

Great, indeed, is this privilege which has come down to us from the distant centuries; and yet it is no easy task to which we bind ourselves. It is very easy to become perfunctory in the discharge of this duty, as of every other duty which is of constant occurrence. It is very easy to let our lips repeat

the prayers while the heart and mind are far away. It is difficult to concentrate our attention throughout the service. We must make up our minds that while to "say a service" is very easy, to say it with a close and concentrated attention is very difficult. It is, indeed, a difficulty which belongs to continuous prayer, of whatever kind, whether public or private; and the same precautions which we take with regard to our private prayers will be necessary when we come before God to repeat the prayers of the Church.

First of all, then, let us never hurry into God's Presence. *Be in time for the service*; rather be ready some few minutes before the service begins, and do your utmost to get rid of distracting thoughts. Punctuality, always important in the life of a priest, is doubly important here. And then, when we are in our place in choir, begin with a private act of adoration; think again to Whom it is you are to speak, and then earnestly pray God to cleanse the heart from all "empty and alien" thoughts, to illuminate the mind, and kindle the affections, that you may "worthily, attentively, and devoutly" offer up the worship of God.

You will thus have made a good beginning ; and if, as the service proceeds, you become conscious that the mind is wandering off to other things, go back at once in thought to God, and renew the intention with which you began, as you fix the mind and heart once more upon Him, Whose ambassador you are. Do not gabble the service, do not drawl, and do not mumble.

Endeavour to fix your attention on God, and on God alone—His greatness, His holiness, His love for us men, as shown forth in the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Cross. In the prayers, beseech Him humbly ; in the Psalms and Canticles, praise Him fervently ; in the Lessons, listen to His voice ; and, as the closing Benediction falls upon the ear, let the peace of God settle down upon the heart. The service ended, you will adore God again, thank Him for giving you the opportunity of worship, pray for pardon for your inattention, and for that of your people, and, if time allows, repeat the Lord's Prayer.

Mattins and Evensong are the only Offices which are of obligation to English clergy ; but we shall most of us do well to say at least one or two of the Lesser Hours. As a man gets

into work, he will find that a time of recollectedness in the middle of the day is little short of a necessity if he aspires to any high ideal of the Ministerial life. Let him, then, fix, as far as circumstances allow, a definite time for prayer, and possibly, also, for intercession and particular self-examination; and whatever other prayers he says at that time, let him say Sext. Happy is he who before Ordination has made himself acquainted with at least a portion of the hundred and nineteenth psalm, so "infinitely varied in its expressions, yet incessantly one in its direction"—its direction towards God, the supreme object of our life and worship. "Nothing," it has been beautifully said, "so expresses the true spirit of ecclesiastics as the hundred and nineteenth psalm—the pure intention to live for God, the zeal for His glory, the charity for sinners, the enthusiastic love of the Divine law and the Divine perfections, the cheerfulness without levity, the gentleness without softness, the collectedness and gravity which is never stern or repulsive; in short, the inward and outward bearing of the priest of Jesus Christ."¹

¹ Liddon, "Priest in his Inner Life," p. 48.

Let us learn to make the Offices which we recite times of real communion with God, times when we set ourselves to thank and praise God—to thank Him for His many mercies to us, to praise Him for what He is. And while we say them also as acts of intercession for the Church at large, and most of all for our own parishioners, let us see to it that the saying of the service shall be a means whereby our own characters may be “strengthened, deepened, chastened, purified,” day by day.

MEDITATION.

In lege Domini voluntas ejus, et in lege ejus meditabitur
die et nocte.—Ps. i. 2.

CHAPTER IX.

MEDITATION.

“ Be still then, and know that I am God.”—Ps. xlvi. 10.

WE have dwelt in a former chapter upon the fact that when our Lord called the Apostles, He called them, in the first place, to be *with Himself*; and this fact suggests that one of the most serious parts of the life of a clergyman is the “cultivation of the devotional spirit.” Prayer, Intercession, and the saying of the Daily Service, are all helps to this great end; but we now pass to another means of cultivating and sustaining the devotional temper and spirit, viz. Meditation.

Meditation has been defined as “the quiet, serious, devout fixing of the mind on some great truth or fact of religion, holding it before the mind steadily, silently, brooding over it till it becomes warm and vital, and melts into us.”

Meditation employs both the active and

the passive faculties. On the one side it is a listening to God's voice—"Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth;" on the other side it is an earnest attempt to reach out towards God, to know more and more about Him as He is in His infinite perfections—the eternal, self-existent Being on Whom all other existence hangs—and as He is in His dealings with us men: "My soul is athirst for God." And the subject-matter of meditation is the Bible.

In its simplest and widest sense, Meditation is reading the Bible devotionally. With so many helps to the critical study of the sacred Book in our hands, with so much light which has been thrown in recent years upon the exact text, is there not sometimes a danger lest we should forget the legitimate limits of critical investigation? After all, what, primarily, is the Bible? It is, indeed, a vast warehouse of the greatest interest to the student of history or of archæology. It is full of poetry of unrivalled beauty and power. It is welcomed by those who investigate the science of "comparative religions." But the Bible, while it is all this, is a great deal more than this. Primarily, the Bible is for us Christians the Word of God. It is God's

message to man's soul ; it is the vehicle of the unveiling of Himself to man. In the Bible God speaks to us "as a man speaketh to his friend ;" and the fundamental and primary use of the Bible is to help us to know more about God.

In these days of examination and competition, when, almost from the necessities of the case, the Bible is treated and lectured on "like any other book," it is difficult to bear in mind that when we have arrived at the exact reading of any passage, and its exact grammatical meaning, we have but begun our task—we have but "spread the table for the spiritual banquet which is to follow ;" for the "utmost that criticism can do is to afford a correct text for the spiritual eye."

We may know the geography of the Holy Land ; we may have the Kings of Israel and Judah at our fingers' ends, or the chronology of the minor prophets ; we may have a keen intellectual appreciation of the poetry of the prophets ; we may have entirely made up our minds as to the date of the last twenty-six chapters of Isaiah, or the last six of Zechariah ; but if we stop there we shall not be making

use of the Bible for spiritual food, for the soul—*i.e.* for Meditation.

It is, perhaps, worth while to insist on this point, for we cannot allow this kind of language to be dismissed as “old-fashioned,” or “behind the times.” For what does it imply? Does it take away from the importance of a critical study of the Bible? from a microscopic analysis, if you will, of the Greek and Hebrew text? from a careful comparison of verse with verse? from a thorough investigation of the style and language, peculiarities and dates, of the sacred writers?

Certainly nothing of this is intended; ours would indeed be the last age in which any such concession could be made. We do not, any of us, desire to advocate an illiterate or unscholarly handling of the books of the Bible; and if we do not, as far as opportunity allows, study the Bible critically, we are, to say the least of it, most unwise. But when all has been said that ought to be said about the duty of critical investigation, it remains true that criticism has its limits; it can but furnish the materials which the devout reader of the Bible is to use for his own purposes. Criticism can answer such questions as, “What is

the historical or literary meaning of the passage?" But there is a further and a more important question which criticism cannot answer, and that is, "What does this or that passage say to *me*?"

"Thy Word is a lantern unto my feet: and a light unto my paths." "Oh, how sweet are Thy words unto my throat: yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth."

These verses, and scores of others, point to the truest, because the most fundamental, use of the Bible. All commentaries, all text-books, all books about the Bible should lead up to the study of the Bible as the Word of God speaking to the soul of man.

But what, let us ask, in the more restricted sense, is Meditation? It has been defined as "the exercise of all the powers of the soul in the apprehension of God;" and such a definition warns us at once that it is no desultory practice, but that to meditate well demands real effort. Let us, then, describe a meditation of a systematic kind.

The subject naturally divides itself under two heads—the preparation for meditation, and the meditation itself.

1. In regard to the first of these, the

question naturally arises, On what are we going to meditate? If we are using some book of meditations, or if we are going systematically through some books of the Bible, this question is answered for us, and, speaking generally, it is best for all of us thus to have some definite course of meditation going on. But it is well from time to time to interrupt such a course, and to select a subject which has some special bearing upon our own character or work.

This is a point on which the Abbé Dubois—a real spiritual genius—insists.¹ He deprecates making meditations “in the air”—meditations which have little to do with the wants of our own character; he urges upon us the practical utility of selecting a subject which is in harmony with our own spiritual wants, or which will help to correct us of some fault, or to acquire some virtue of which we stand in need. Certainly this plan gives a point and meaning to the meditation which nothing else can supply. If we desire, for example, to deepen our sense of penitence, it would be well to take part of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and make, perhaps, three

¹ “Le Saint Prêtre,” p. 410.

or four meditations, taking the different portions each day: the going astray—the self-will of sin; “He began to be in want”—the unsatisfying nature of sin; “I will arise and go to my father”—the first stirrings of conscience; the meeting with the Father—the welcome home, and the crown of penitence.

Or again, if we want to strengthen ourselves in habits of prayer, it would be natural to take for our meditation the parable of the Syro-Phœnician woman, or the Friend at Midnight. Thus Meditation becomes practical. “Let us endeavour,” says Dubois, “to make our meditations with a generous desire of becoming more holy and more perfect, and we shall soon be astonished at the fruits which meditation will produce in us.”

Whatever the subject that is selected, it is a good plan, if we have the opportunity, to read it over the night before; it may give us a good thought to fall back upon in the waking hours of the night and morning.

2. Now as to the order and method of the meditation itself:

(a) First, then, we place ourselves on our knees, and make an earnest effort to remember the Presence of God, and make an act of

adoration : " I adore Thee, O God, from the depths of my own nothingness."

(*b*) Cast out from the soul resolutely every sinful inclination : " Cleanse Thou me from my secret faults ; keep Thy servant also from presumptuous sins."

(*c*) Make an act of self-oblation : " I give myself to Thee, O my God, in life and in death, and here especially in this meditation. Do Thou speak to my heart and will, and open the eyes of my soul. Taceant omnes doctores ; sileant universæ creaturæ in conspectu Tuo ; Tu mihi loquere solus. Help me to listen to Thy voice."

(*d*) Pray for the aid of God the Holy Ghost, that He may illuminate the understanding, enkindle the affection, invigorate the will, cleanse the memory, control the imagination. Repeat the *Veni Creator*, or some other prayer to the Holy Spirit.

We now turn to the subject-matter of the meditation, and we exercise in turn the various faculties of the soul.

First the imagination is brought into play to picture the scene or the circumstances as vividly as we can. If there is no picture or scene suggested we can repeat again and

again the text, or part of the text, on which we are to meditate. This is called the "first prelude," and is generally followed by a prayer that we may gain some definite grace, or that we may remember some duty. After the exercise of the imagination comes that of the mind; we use it to analyze the subject, to think out and to brood over this or that point. We ask ourselves how it affects *us*; what is its bearing on our character, circumstances, life, or work. "How does this affect me?" "What is the lesson here for me?"

Such questionings will occupy no small part of our meditation, and then we pass to the affections and will.

Meditation is "something more than mere study." We must fill our hearts more and more with a desire to love God and to please Him better. Let the heart, then, go out in love to God. Try and lift it up from earth to Heaven. Ask Him to take your love away from transitory and lower joys, and to fix it on Himself and on things eternal. Last of all, the will enters, and brings the meditation to a climax. The object of Meditation is practical, and we make a resolution arising

out of the subject we have considered. "I will strive against such and such a wrong tendency;" "I will make amends to this or that person;" "I will think more of this or that duty."

The Meditation is now over; but do not hurry out of God's Presence. Look back and thank Him for the opportunity He has given you for thus knowing more of Him; ask for pardon for wandering thoughts and distractions; say the Lord's Prayer and the *Anima Christi*. If you can, follow the advice of St. Francis de Sales, and pluck "some flower from the garden of your meditation"—some text, some word, some verse of a hymn—to carry with you throughout the day.

We have given a sketch, however inadequate, of a systematic meditation such as may be found in many books now happily current amongst us; but if this should meet the eye of some to whom systematic meditation of this kind—orderly employment of the different faculties of the soul—should seem impossible, let me implore him not to be discouraged. Nobody has ever yet found meditation easy; and if we cannot meditate

systematically, let us meditate unsystematically; but at all costs let us meditate. Distractions will come, interruptions, dryness. We shall sometimes even be tempted to think that we are made in such a way as that we cannot meditate; nevertheless, in spite of all this, let us meditate. Every one, we may be sure, is at times tempted to abandon Meditation; but we must not be discouraged.

Meditation by way of contemplation is for few; meditation, orderly and systematic, as we have sketched it, may also be for few; but this is not of the essence of the matter. Let us take the Bible, and read it and pray over it. Let us take a devotional commentary, and do the same. Let us take a book of exposition of the Bible, and do the same. Anything will do which implies a real desire to commune with God. We shall find, when we look back, that we have exercised mind, imagination, affection, will, in reaching out towards, or in listening to, God. Some sort of meditation is within the compass of all, for meditation means speaking to God, and letting God speak to us.

Choose a definite time, then, in the morning, and keep to it rigidly day by day. Begin

with a meditation of twenty minutes ; aim at making it, at least after Ordination, as long as half an hour.

If it be asked, " Why do you lay so much stress on this practice of Meditation ? " it may be enough to say—

1. Meditation will enable us to assimilate Divine truths, which it will be our duty to impart to others. Before or apart from Meditation we believe the Catholic Faith, the fundamental verities are more or less clearly apprehended, and we may be able to impart the knowledge that we have to others. Well and good ! But this is not all that you want as a teacher. You may be an adept in putting theological conclusions before others ; but the priest who is to build up and guide souls in the way of salvation needs more than this. He needs to have his conclusions turned to convictions ; the dogmas of religion must be vital truths to him, ingrown into his moral being, veritable parts of himself. We cannot too often remember that theological truths address themselves not merely to the intellect, but to the whole of the moral being ; we must therefore saturate our whole being, by Meditation, with the truths of religion,

that we may effectively address ourselves to the moral being—the heart and will as well as the intellect—of those to whom we minister.

2. Meditation will help us, as nothing else will, to cultivate recollectedness. In our day of ceaseless activity and enterprise, was there ever greater need of recollectedness? We know what the absence of it is in the practical life of a priest. The turmoil of parochial activity, the fuss of parochial work, the schools, the clubs, the meetings, the teas, the entertainments, the countless organizations indispensable now in our parishes! They are excellent, but they do not help us to increase that spirit of quiet repose and recollectedness, that reserve of force, which is so necessary a feature in the life and character of a good priest.

Meditation “lifts us above the distractions and turmoil of daily life. It creates calmness. It makes recollection and occasional prayer through the day more easy.”¹

¹ W. B. Trevelyan, “Suggestions on the Method of Meditation.”

THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

Eucharistiæ etiam sacrificium vere docemus, nec sacrificii crucis “nudam esse commemorationem” credimus. . . .
Primo enim sacrificium laudis et gratiarum offerimus; tum vero sacrificium Crucis Patri proponimus et repræsentamus, et per illud remissionem peccatorum et omnia alia Dominicæ passionis beneficia pro tota et universa Ecclesia impetramus.
—*Responsio Archiepiscoporum Angliæ de Ordinationibus Anglicanis.*

CHAPTER X.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

“For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come.”—I COR. xi. 26.

THE “highest and most characteristic” act of a priest is to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. It is, indeed, “the highest service which a creature can offer to the Supreme Being.”¹ It is the “central and supreme act of the Christian Ministry, by which it is directly associated in the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ.”

“At least ten minutes or a quarter of an hour (independently of any more formal preparatory office, or needful examination of conscience) should be spent by the celebrant alone with God, in such earnest and confiding colloquy as the practice of meditation will have rendered easy and delightful—a time in which to pass in review the many who hang

¹ Liddon, “Priest in his Inner Life.”

on his intercession, in which to offer himself and his offering to the Divine Glory, in which to concentrate all the powers of his soul for an act at which, as St. Chrysostom says, attendant angels tremble, and which thrills irresistibly through the courts and ranks of heaven up to the very throne of God.”¹

One great mark, then, of a true priest is devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; and we must begin to learn this during our preparation for Ordination.

The Holy Communion will be to us not an “occasional service,” but the very breath and substance of our spiritual lives. Those words of our Lord, “As the living Father hath sent ME, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth ME, even he shall live by ME,” will be constantly in our hearts as we renew our intercourse with Jesus Christ again and again in Communion. “The thought contained in these words,” says Dr. Randall, “is enough to send us back to the last communion which we have made, pondering, adoring, and moved to speechless and unutterable thankfulness; or to lead us on to our next Communion full of awe, yet full of longing—full of awe as we

¹ Liddon, “Priest in his Inner Life.”

think what He is Whom we invite to visit us ; what we are to whom He comes—full of longing as we think what He can do for us.”¹

Frequent devout communion is indeed the secret wherein our great strength will lie. It will give us the sense of power ; we shall go forth morning by morning (or as often as we may) fed with the Bread of Life which comes down from heaven, ready to face all difficulties, to brace ourselves for any task which God may lay upon us, certain that in His strength we shall be carried through. It will give us the sense of companionship with our Lord. Friends must separate, or they fail us, but we need never lose the friendship of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. There is nothing which can so help a man to bear the burden of solitude—which is to some extent the lot of every priest—as this companionship of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar. There are, indeed, times, possibly long intervals, when our feelings do not help us to realize this truth ; we have not that warm glow of felt enthusiasm with which perhaps in earlier days we looked forward to our Communion. But feelings, after all, are a

¹ Church Congress, 1896.

luxury: we cannot command them in one direction or another; and what God looks at is the bent of the will—the controlling faculty of the moral being. As again and again I approach the altar, do I desire, do I *will*, to become more like our Lord? That is the question. Do I desire to gain from Him those graces which self-examination has taught me my character needs—more humility, more patience, more purity and heavenly-mindedness, more constant recollectedness, more love of God and man? If so, all is well, whether I feel the glow of a warm-hearted devotion or whether He sends me dryness and coldness of heart. My one desire is to live closer to Him Whom now I receive under sacramental veils, but Whom hereafter I shall see with unclouded eye, and in that sight I shall find the full satisfaction of every faculty of my being.

Thoughtful preparation over-night, a concentrated act of thanksgiving after communion, increased watchfulness over the inner life, and a conviction dominating my whole being that true happiness consists in union with God, and that the one evil in the world is sin, which separates from God,—

these are the characteristic features of the life of a frequent Communicant. The atmosphere of life to him is the Presence of God, the happiness of life is the Will of God, the motive of life is the Love of God, and the aim of life is the Glory of God.

But the Eucharist is a Sacrifice as well as a Sacrament; it is the earthly counterpart of what our blessed Lord is now doing in heaven. "We believe that as in heaven Christ, our great High Priest, ever offers Himself before the Eternal Father, pleading by His Presence His sacrifice of Himself once offered on the Cross, so on earth, in the Holy Eucharist, that same Body, once for all sacrificed for us, and that same Blood, once for all shed for us, sacramentally present, are offered and pleaded before the Father by the priest, as our Lord ordained to be done in remembrance of Himself when He instituted the Blessed Sacrament of His Body and Blood."

What the Church has ever held on this great subject, what the ancient liturgies, Eastern and Western, teach with one consent, is admirably set forth by Bishop Jeremy Taylor—

“Now, what Christ does in heaven,” he says, “He hath commanded us to do on earth—that is, to represent His death, to commemorate His sacrifice by humble prayer and thankful record; and by faithful manifestation and joyful Eucharist, to lay it before the eyes of our heavenly Father, so ministering in His Priesthood and doing according to His commandment and example; the Church being the image of heaven; the priest, the minister of Christ; the holy table, being a copy of the celestial altar, and the Eternal Sacrifice of the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, being always the same.

“It bleeds no more after the finishing it on the Cross; but it is wonderfully represented in heaven, and graciously represented here. And the event of it is this, that as Christ, in virtue of His sacrifice on the Cross, intercedes for us with His Father, so does the minister of Christ’s Priesthood here; that the virtue of the Eternal Sacrifice may be salutary and effectual to all the needs of the Church, both for things temporal and eternal.”¹

The late Dr. Philpotts, Bishop of Exeter, says: “The Holy Eucharist, considered as a

¹ “Worthy Communicant,” chap. i. § 4.

sacrifice, is *commemorative and propitiatory*: commemorative of the one great sacrifice consummated on Mount Calvary, and a way of representing it as a solemn memorial to God the Father; propitiatory, not in the sense of making a new propitiation (which can never be), but in that of obtaining the favour of God by pleading the death of His Son, 'showed forth' in this Sacrament. As, then, the Sacrifice is continuous, its propitiatory virtue is continuous, and the fulness of the propitiation is pleaded for the whole Church whensoever the commemoration of it is exhibited in the Eucharist."¹

When, in Article XXXI., the Church of England rejected the "monstrous error" that the sacrifice of the Altar involves a fresh humiliation and the repeated death of the Divine Victim; or that other error, by which it was taught that the sacrifice of the Cross was for original sin, and the sacrifice of the Altar for actual sin—there is no kind of evidence in her representative theologians that she rejected the ancient and universal teaching of Catholic Christendom in regard to

¹ Pastoral Letter, 1851, pp. 54, 55 (quoted in Prynne's "Eucharistic Sacrifice").

the mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. "One thing alone she is jealous of, that nothing should seem to overshadow, or interfere with, or supplement the meritoriousness of the One Sacrifice of our dear Lord upon the Cross."¹

Our duty, then, as priests will be clear—to do what we can to bring back into greater prominence this great service of the Church ; to let men see that we believe what we say when we teach them that the Eucharist is the centre of Christian worship. "We can never be content as long as a choir-office is allowed to usurp the distinctive honour of Sunday worship. To substitute an office, however venerable, however beautiful, in place of the Eucharist, will be found in the end to be substituting an arrangement of man for the ordered purpose of God."²

There is, then, a great work in this respect before those who are, in these days, looking forward to Ordination. No pains should be spared to make ourselves acquainted with the teaching of the Church on the subject of the Holy Eucharist—as a Sacrifice and a

¹ Dr. Pusey, "Eirenicon," p. 27.

² Rev. W. C. E. Newbolt, Church Congress, 1896.

Sacrament. We shall then look forward to celebrating as often as we properly and reverently may as the great privilege of the Priesthood.

The Eucharist is the great intercessory act of the Church, and we may not deny the right of the faithful to be present at its celebration, even though they are not prepared, on every occasion, to receive the Holy Sacrament.

There is, indeed, considerable prejudice at present against this practice; but we may feel hopeful that this prejudice will melt away gradually as men come to consider the custom of the whole Catholic Church in this matter, as well as the custom of some of the more thoughtful Dissenting bodies.

“Our children in Scotland,” says Dr. Milligan, “remain in church during the celebration of the Supper, because they are not strangers. They also are not strangers who, though they may not communicate on the special occasions, do communicate on other occasions, or at other hours.”¹

¹ Milligan, “Ascension,” p. 304—note quoted in Canon Newbolt’s paper at the Church Congress, 1896.

Thoughtful Churchmen, it is to be hoped, will soon be agreed that it is better to be present and not communicate, than never to be present at all. They will see that even if the Early Church did not know anything of such a practice, (which is by no means clear), it is much more certain that she knew nothing of a Christian who did not attend the Lord's Service on the Lord's Day.

It is, indeed, very far from our wish that a beautiful and venerable service such as Mattins should be entirely omitted ; we plead only for a truer proportion in these matters—a proportion more in harmony with the mind of Ancient Christendom. We cannot expect any but a comparatively small number of our people to communicate more frequently than once a month, or once a fortnight. What, then, are they to do on Sundays when they do not communicate? Attend Morning Prayer, or be present at the Eucharistic Offering? Who can doubt what answer the ancient Church would have given to this question? For the early Church knew nothing of the custom of Christians, not under ecclesiastical censure, going out in the middle of the Eucharistic Service. Where, indeed,

is the defence for this practice, of which there is no hint in the Prayer-book, and which yet prevails so largely among us ?

There may, indeed, be danger before us in our efforts to bring back the Eucharist to its rightful place ; and certainly there are great difficulties. There are difficulties in teaching it. There must be no riding rough-shod over prejudices which may sometimes appear to be unreasonable. There must be no high-handed, ill-considered action which will alienate the old and thoughtful. We shall need great humility and patience in this matter, great thoughtfulness, consideration, and care. We shall have to remember that we owe a debt to the old people as well as to the young. But it has been bravely and truly said, "When the abuse comes, let us rectify it ; and remember this, that at present we have to deal with an abuse at least equally great, whereby large masses of our people grow up, live, and die content with attendance at a choir-office, of whom it may almost be said, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be a Eucharist.'"¹

The candidate for Holy Orders will do well

¹ Canon Newbolt, *l.c.*

to ponder again and again, in his study and on his knees, the great questions involved in this subject of the Holy Eucharist. The Church of England has no special "view" of her own in regard to this Mystery. She appeals to antiquity and to the whole voice of Catholic Christendom. She believes, as the whole Church believes, that our Blessed Lord is really and truly present in a spiritual and ineffable way in the Sacrament; that though His Body and Blood are "naturally" in heaven, yet they are spiritually, supernaturally, or sacramentally present in Holy Communion; that they are there independently of our faith and in virtue of consecration. She does not, indeed, tell us *how* this is so, for it is a mystery which necessarily transcends the grasp of human faculties. As Bishop Andrews says, "The Presence we believe to be real,¹ as you (Romanists) do; in regard to the mode of the Presence we define nothing rashly." Whatever disputes, therefore, there may have been, or whatever disputes there are now, in regard to the *method* of our Lord's Presence,

¹ "Præsentiam (inquam) credimus, nec minus quam vos, veram. De modo præsentiaë nil temere definimus, addo, nec anxie inquirimus.—*Responsio*, p. 13.

we are at one, with all historic Christendom, in confessing its *reality*.

We must strive, then, to show forth in our public worship that this is really so ; that the Eucharist is the true centre of Christian worship, the meeting-point of heaven and earth ; and, above all, we shall strive that what we believe in our hearts we may, in this as in other respects, show forth in our lives. Thoughtful and careful preparation is at least as necessary for the clergy as for the laity. And let us be specially careful about our thanksgiving. Have a regular and fixed form, such as may be found in any good manual of prayers, and say it thoughtfully and without hurry, and then add aspirations and colloquies, such as your special circumstances suggest. Be sure, at all costs, to make the act of thanksgiving a REALITY, lest on retiring from church you plunge thoughtlessly into the occupations of the day, forgetful of Him Whom you have so lately received into your soul.

There will also surely be times when we shall prolong our thanksgiving, by making our meditations bear upon the mystery of the Eucharist. It will, indeed, be a terrible day

for us if ever our frequent opportunities for celebrating or communicating should make us perfunctory or mechanical. Increased privileges of this kind make a constant demand for increased watchfulness over the inner life.

SELF-DISCIPLINE.

Mortificatio est virtus moralis, quæ tum appetitus internos animæ, tum sensus externos corporis moderatur secundum dictamen rationis et fidei.—J. SCHNEIDER.

CHAPTER XI.

SELF-DISCIPLINE.

“I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.—1 COR. ix. 27.

THE need of Self-discipline is a result of the Fall. We inherit a fallen nature—a nature, that is, with an inherent bias towards evil.

When, after Adam's fall, the supernatural robe of righteousness was withdrawn, there ensued disorder in his faculties. The faculties of mind and affection, which had been held in complete harmony and balance by a will which itself moved in harmony with God's will, and was directed by His Spirit, were thrown into confusion.

The mind became clouded, the affections depraved, the controlling force of the will deplorably weakened. And it is this tainted and weakened nature which Adam has handed on inevitably to his descendants. Two facts

to which in recent times attention has been specially directed—heredity and the solidarity of the human race—have done much to confirm the doctrine of “original sin.” Fallen Adam could not do otherwise than hand on a fallen nature to his posterity. The fact of an evil bias within us is a matter of experience: the Bible tells us *how* it came there.

There are, then, two opposing principles within us at constant war with one another. St. Paul calls these two principles “the flesh” and “the spirit;” and he tells us that these “are contrary the one to the other.” Self-discipline, then, consists in bringing the lower part of our being—“the flesh”—into subservience to the higher part—“the spirit.” The “spirit” was intended to rule the “flesh:” the body was intended to be the obedient instrument of the spirit; but more than half our failures have arisen because we have allowed the “flesh” to usurp authority over the “spirit,” because we have allowed the lower to master the higher.

Now, Self-discipline is the constant effort to maintain the higher principle within us in its rightful place of authority.

But we must not start on our warfare in a Pelagian spirit ; we are to fight and conquer not in our own strength, but by the power of God. Nothing, indeed, can be done without the co-operation of the human will. God will not force us to be good. The human will must co-operate with Divine grace, and grace in the Christian sense is the power which comes to us from our union with our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is the work of the Second Adam to undo or counteract the evil caused by the fall of the First Adam. We are as really linked by supernatural birth to Christ, as we are by natural birth joined to Adam. Christ came not merely to be our Example and our Atonement, but to be also the abiding source to us of new life ; and this new life is poured into us by the sacraments, and is given to us in answer to prayer : and the work of self-discipline is to develop within us the power and life of the Second Adam—"Christ in you, the hope of glory"—till we become, by the transforming and perfecting power of the Holy Ghost, the men God intended us to be.

What, then, are the means of our warfare ?

Prayer, Meditation, Holy Communion—these we have already dwelt upon; we pass now to other and subsidiary helps.

Fasting.—The body must be kept in its true place. Our Lord plainly teaches us to fast, both by precept (“then shall they fast in those days”) and by His own example. All the Saints throughout the history of the Church teach us the same lesson. The Bible and the Church are alike clear; the one teaches us to fast, the other tells us when. We shall make a rule, then, to observe the days of abstinence and fasting prescribed in the Prayer-book; we shall do what we may to counteract the tendency to select Friday as the day for entertainments. Our own practice will be to decline all social invitations on these days, as well as on Vigils, or Ember Days, or during Lent. Following the ancient rule of the Church, we shall abstain on these days from flesh-meat, as far as health permits. It is, indeed, possible to break the spirit of a day of abstinence while we observe this outward rule; but we may remember the wise words of Bishop Butler in regard to external religion. “The form,” he says, “may indeed be where there is little of the thing itself; but

the thing itself cannot be preserved among men without the form.”¹ This truth is strikingly illustrated in the case we are considering. Men have abandoned the old rule (which the Homilies make it plain was intended to be observed) of abstaining from flesh-meat on fast days; they have said that it does not matter how you fast if only you fast. But how few there are of those who have given up the ancient rule who do really fast!

Whatever we do must, of course, be real, and we need not be ashamed of outward acts of religion, if only we are sure that our motive is a pure one. Every Friday should bring with it, in some way or other, the mark of the Cross, and we need especially to remember in days of luxury that the Christian must be temperate *in all things!* The sin of gluttony is by no means extinct; and we must train ourselves to eat with thankfulness what is set before us, and to regard meals not as ends, but as means.

In any case we must be real. To deny ourselves in respect of food, but to put no check upon our smoking, is not real; and we

¹ Charge to the Clergy of Durham, 1751: “Works,” vol. ii. p. 405, edit. Gladstone.

need from time to time to pray that our fasting may be real. Indeed, fasting, to be safe, must ever be linked with prayer, otherwise it will make us irritable and disagreeable; it will do ourselves no good, and will do others harm.

The objects of fasting¹ are, let us remind ourselves—

(1) To discipline the body. We pray to God “to give us grace to use *such* abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey His godly motions in righteousness, and true holiness;”² but to injure our health by fasting, so as to make ourselves unfit for the work we have to do, is utterly wrong.

(2) Fasting is an outward expression of sorrow for sin. The Church bids us fast as a sign of mourning for sin. “There is no calamity save sin.” She does not bid us fast for loss of friends or disappointments. Why? Because these may be blessings in disguise. But sin is always hateful. The Church fasts, then, in times of penitence.

¹ See Dr. Lock’s paper at Rhyl Church Congress for an admirable summary of the rationale of fasting.

² Collect for the First Sunday in Lent.

(3) Fasting is always a *preparation* in the system of the Church. By fasting we prepare for Baptism and Holy Communion. Friday is a preparation for Sunday, Ember Days are a preparation for Ordination, Vigils for Festivals, Lent for Easter. Fasting is never, then, an end in itself.

Discipline the thoughts.—"Do not think," it has been said, "that it does not matter what you think about: your thoughts are making you." The temptation to evil thoughts is not sin, but if the will consents to evil thoughts there must be sin. Herein, then, no small part of our self-discipline consists. We must learn gradually to master our thoughts, to check the beginnings of wrong thoughts. The bitter, angry, impatient thoughts must be checked; the proud, envious, self-conscious thoughts must be stifled; the sensual and unclean thoughts must be cast out. Anger and impatience must give place to habitual gentleness and self-control. If only we clergy could learn to believe in the "power of gentleness!" If only we could remember that impatience and anger, which wreck so much good work, are signs of weakness, while gentleness is a sign of real

strength! Who so strong as God, yet who so gentle?

Pride and envy must learn to give place to humility and love; no self-assertion, no wish to claim the first place: "in honour preferring one another." Sensuality must give place, though it be a lifelong struggle, to purity and the love of God.

It needs great watchfulness and constant prayer, so that we may habitually walk in God's Presence, and let Him look down into the inner centre of our being, controlling and purifying us as we look upwards to Him for His support and comfort, and praying Him to "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit."

Discipline the affections.—The heart was made for God. Nothing else, then, can give it permanent rest and satisfaction. Well will it be for us if we realize this at the outset of our work in life. The capacity for strong affection is one of the greatest of God's gifts, and yet conscience is very plain in telling us how dangerous a gift it is without vigorous and constant self-discipline. Our best is often very near to our worst, and without a strong hand kept upon the rein of our

hearts we may easily fall into terrible sins. Again and again we shall have to take our hearts, so to say, into our hands, and offer them up to God, praying that He will purify and cleanse them, that He may take off our love from earthly things and fix it on Himself and on things eternal.

How long we are in learning the First Commandment! Why? Because we do not pray enough to love God with all the heart, with all the mind, with all the soul, and with all the strength. We need, then, to pray to do what we have to do habitually from the supernatural motive of the love of God.

We often complain of the difficulty of realizing the Presence of God; we so often forget God. But can we forget one whom we really love? The reason, then, that we forget God is that we have failed as yet to love God.

And here it is impossible not to say a word on the subject of celibacy.

The clergy of the English Church are free to marry "at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness."¹ That this is a wise and right relaxation of

¹ Article XXXII.

ancient discipline few thoughtful men would doubt ; for "experience has shown that to impose a rule of celibacy upon some thousands of men, without taking note of individual temperament or vocation, is to put a strain even upon consecrated human nature which it will not always bear, and which may lead too easily to grave disaster."¹

Nevertheless, it is much to be wished that those who are looking forward to Ordination should solemnly face the question again and again upon their knees before God, whether it may not be His will that they should give themselves to Him in the dedicated and virgin life.

The truth is, whatever else may be said about it, the question is a very practical one. We hear on all sides distressing accounts of the terrible poverty of great numbers of the clergy. How has this poverty come about? Very often it has arisen from reckless and improvident marriages.

"What would the author of the seventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, with his Apostolic prescription for the 'present distress' addressed to all Christians,

¹ Liddon, "Devotion to the Church of Christ."

have prescribed to Christian ministers in such circumstances as ours? ”¹

To make a rash vow of celibacy, indeed, before we have considered the subject most carefully, and brought it before God again and again in prayer, is worse than useless—it is wrong; it is to court disaster. We must “sit down and count the cost.” We must think what it means, and face it beforehand. We must think, indeed, of what we give up—the comforts, companionship, and solace and satisfaction of married life! We must think more of what we gain. Clerical celibacy is not a negative thing, it is positive; it is not simply “not marrying,” or a “bachelor life;” it implies a desire for unreserved self-consecration to our Lord Jesus Christ, a single-hearted desire to live only for Him. We renounce earthly espousals to gain heavenly espousals. Continence is nothing less than a special gift from God, and “all men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.”² It is a gift from God to be sought in prayer, to be fostered and nurtured in prayer and watchfulness; but if the external circumstances of the Church suggest that few

¹ Liddon, *ibid.*

² St. Matt. xix. 11.

clergy can marry prudently who have not more or less ample means of their own, why should we doubt that our Lord will give to us, if we ask Him, the grace of continence, without which no man can safely or rightly abstain from marriage? And if the gift is given to us, let us be brave and trustful. "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."¹

Self-discipline! Mortification! Being what we are, this is, in one form or another, the work of life. The constant struggle must go on all through our earthly pilgrimage between the higher and the lower, between duty on the one side and inclination on the other. Enlist passion on the side of what is right. Hunger and thirst after righteousness, and we shall in the end be filled.

Practically, whether we succeed or not will depend very largely on whether we can make and keep a rule of life.

For any high attainment in the priestly life a rule of some sort, be it never so simple, is indispensable.

Regular hours for rising, for prayer, for meditation, for study, for visiting, for meals,

¹ St. Matt. xix. 12.

and (not least important) for going to bed—these are practically essential. How many a clergyhouse at the present day would be benefited by a simple rule of this sort!

Instead of the clerical life being a constant rush and scramble, it would be an example of ordered quietness and disciplined work.

STUDY.

Bonus clericus omne studium ad amorem Dei ordinat . . . quærit Dei gloriam et animarum auxilium ; curat, ut totum studium suum sit sacrum, ut Deum semper præsentem habeat, ante studium per intentionem, in studio per aspirationem, post studium per reditum ad Ipsum ut ad centrum.—
J. SCHNEIDER.

CHAPTER XII.

STUDY.

“For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth : for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.”—MAL. ii. 7.

THE English clergy are, by the terms of our Ordinal, put under a very solemn obligation to study. The duty of reading would seem, indeed, to come second only to that of prayer.

“Will you be diligent in Prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same?” So runs the question in the Ordination Service ; and the answer is, “I will endeavour myself so to do, the Lord being my helper.”

We shall be put, as priests, under a three-fold obligation to “minister the Doctrine and Sacraments and the Discipline of Christ ;” and the first of these obligations, “to minister

the Doctrine of Christ," corresponds to the function of the Church comprehended in the term "ecclesia docens." "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts."¹ The clergy are prophets as well as pastors and priests. We have, then, to teach the Catholic Faith; and what a vista this thought opens out before us! Away with the idea, in preparing for Ordination, that you have just to "get up" a few books in order to pass a Bishop's Examination, and then there need be no more study. No; neither the Church nor the Ordinal contemplate a priest who does not, according to his opportunity, study theology.

Once ordained, in the matter of study and the acquirement of knowledge, as in other matters, we have to "wax riper and stronger in our ministry;" and in preparing for Ordination we do but introduce ourselves to those subjects which are to be our constant study throughout life. We shall have to teach the people the Catholic Faith in its fulness and in its consistency; not a bit here and a bit

¹ Mal. ii. 7.

there, but as a coherent whole, having its separate parts knit and bound together. We have to "prophesy according to the proportion of faith." The people around us are wanting not so much exhortation as careful, patient, accurate, systematic teaching; and to do this effectively demands constant study as certainly as to do it sympathetically means constant prayer.

We have to teach the people, and especially to teach the poor, what treasures they have enshrined in the Catholic Creeds, how God's Revelation of Himself corresponds marvelously to the deepest needs of the human soul. That the Eternal God has indeed taken Flesh in the womb of Mary, and so has given a fresh start to our poor fallen nature, so that when man cries out for pardon and renewal we can teach them to say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," and in the sacraments conveying grace to the soul; when they cry out for love, we can teach them to say, "I believe in the Communion of Saints;" when they ask for ultimate satisfaction for the higher needs of their being, we can teach them, "I believe in the Life Everlasting." And all these wonderful privileges they have

not as isolated units, but as members of the Body of Christ, for they come to them in the old language of the Creed, "per sanctam ecclesiam."

We must study this dogmatic theology as a systematic whole, so that we may teach it to the people not hardly, dryly, unsympathetically, but as a living glowing system instinct with Divine life; teach it as our Lord taught it—as men were able to bear it; teach it as He taught it, with the heart no less than with the head; for we need not only to convince, but to convert and to persuade; and only the heart of man can speak to man's heart. We need, indeed, accuracy and care, but we need also love if we are to teach effectively. You can't teach men unless you love them, and love is the outcome of prayer.

In preparing, therefore, for Ordination, make two practical resolutions in this respect. Resolve to take pains to be accurate in your teaching; resolve to pray before and as you teach.

But the study of the Scriptures must ever be the foundation of all our study. "Will you be diligent . . . in reading of the Holy

Scriptures?" St. Jerome tells us "that it is the business of the priest to answer the people's questions about the Holy Scriptures. If he be a priest, let him study the law of God. If he knows it not, he declares himself to be no priest; for it is the priest's office to expound the Scriptures to his people."¹

"The country parson," says George Herbert, "is full of all knowledge. . . . But the chief and top of his knowledge consists in the Book of books, the storehouse and magazine of life and comfort—the Holy Scripture. There he sucks and lives."

Before Ordination, no doubt, you will be occupied with certain specified books in which you will be examined; but after Ordination go upon the plan of always having one book of the Bible "on hand." Read it critically if you will, and read it devotionally as the Word of God.

The advance of modern criticism lays some serious obligations upon us in connection with the study of the Bible. On the one hand, we ought to know at least the outlines of what is being said both in England and in

¹ Quoted in Hutchings' "Gleanings," p. 229.

Germany as to the date and composition of the various Books of the Old Testament. We ought, for the sake of the educated people whom we may meet, to know, for example, what Wellhausen and Kuenen, and those who follow them in this country have said or are saying. On the other hand, we must beware of accepting in a wholesale way all that the most "advanced" critics have put forward. Much of what are often spoken of as the "conclusions" of modern criticism would be far more accurately described as speculations, or assumptions, or unproved theories, about which the prudent man will suspend his judgment.

For the last fifty years the criticism of the Old Testament has been in a constant state of fluctuation—the position attained one year has had to give place to quite a different theory a year or two later ; and there is little sign that any finality has even now been reached.

Everything in this connection suggests caution to those whose office it is to instruct others. Our people, thank God, believe still largely in the Bible. Do not let us have to answer before God for having shaken their

faith in its inspiration and veracity because in a careless moment, or, still worse, from motives of pride, we have told them that some great scholars have said that neither the ark nor the tabernacle had any real existence, and that the miracles of the Old Testament are not true.

We have, then, to teach dogmatic theology with a constant appeal to the text of Scripture; but we must not forget another important branch of the sacred science—I mean moral theology. We must study Christian ethics and the application of moral theology to individual cases of conscience. Certainly it is easy to stereotype and classify too much in this respect, but it would seem that our danger lies for the present in an opposite direction. Our danger is not lest we should have too much system, but rather lest we should have no system at all. We are “to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;” we are to deal with individual souls, to help others in their inner life, to show them how to meet temptations, how to combat this or that spiritual foe, to encourage the faint-hearted

and the scrupulous, to check the presumptuous. But, *ars est artium regimen animarum*; it is no easy work. No two characters are quite alike, and different souls need different treatment. If we want to work for man we must know man; but to know man you must study man—his habits, his ways, his passions; and we must study how to apply the Christian moral law to man's moral nature, lest we merely flounder about in vague generalities, and give no heed to the "particular cure of diseased souls."

"The exposition of Christian ethics is becoming more necessary than ever it was. . . . Men are everywhere being led to ask—and to the clergy they look for an answer—questions such as these: What has Christianity done for morals? What is the distinctive stamp of Christian morality? Where is the true standard of the moral life to be found? How can character best be cultivated? What are the distinguishing motives and aims of Christian action? If half the care expended on the ways of a plant or an insect by students of natural science were exercised in systematic study and exposition of the great lines of moral energy and conduct;

if our pulpits re-echoed St. Bernard's sentence, '*Putas, parva res est scire vivere? Magnum vero, imo maximum est,*' the waste and drift of human life which is going on around us would be surely arrested."¹

Of pastoral and mystical theology it may be enough to urge the importance of the study of the lives of the Saints. It has been most truly said that "in the life of faith, imagination has a great part to play, and English imagination requires just that enrichment and purification which knowledge of the lives of these great servants of God would confer upon it."

We may have, then, in regard to the study of theology, some ideal before us—always to have on hand the study of some book of the Bible; always to be reading some treatise on dogmatic or moral theology; always to be studying either some portion of Early or Mediæval Church history, or the biography of some Saint, or of some servant of God.

Let us pass now to the question of *how* one may study.

1. *With a Pure Motive.*—The motive must

¹ Chancellor Worledge, "Systematic Instruction in Religion," Church Congress, 1890.

be the glory of God and the good of souls. Let us aim at this. Here are some wise words of St. Bernard's :—

“Sunt qui scire volunt, ut sciantur ipsi; et turpis vanitas est. Et sunt item qui scire volunt ut scientiam suam vendant, verbi causa, pro pecunia pro honoribus; et turpis quæstus est. Sed sunt quoque qui scire volunt ut ædificant et charitas est. Et item qui scire volunt ut ædificantur; et prudentia est.”

Therefore, in training ourselves to become students of theology, in whatever measure is possible, throughout our life let us set before us these aims :—

Volo studere—

(1) Ut consequar veram sapientiam, non vero plausum, *ψευδώνομον γνῶσιν*, aut lucrum.

(2) Ut vitem Christiano indignum otium.

(3) Ut sim aliquando Ecclesiæ auxilio.

(4) Ut imiter illos Sanctos qui studiis olim fuere dediti.

(5) Ut fiam aptum Dei instrumentum ad omnia.¹

2. *With Prayer.*—Let us combine prayer and study. “Before you begin to read, pray. When you have done with your intellect all

¹ Archbishop Benson, “Vigilemus et Oremus.”

that you can, pray. Pray not to lose the spiritual light in the intellectual." ¹

3. *Diligently*.—"Will you be *diligent*?" This means the vigorous application of our faculties, so that we are *really interested* in what we are reading. This is, indeed, often very difficult for all who are not naturally studious; but the secret of acquiring diligence is to do what we do with unfailing regularity. We must try not to read "by fits and starts." Try not to take up a book "hoping that somebody will call and put you out of your misery." ² "All that is needed," it has been said, "is the habit of attention, and a firm will not to leave what we read till we understand it, be it only a page, or no more than a sentence." ³

To read with a high motive, to read diligently, and to read with prayer—this is the ideal to set before us. Well will it be for us if we have acquired the habit before we are ordained; for after Ordination, in all the business and turmoil of a large parish, where our energies are taxed to the utmost, it will

¹ Archbishop Benson, "Vigilemus et Oremus."

² See Hutchings' "Gleanings," p. 236.

³ Manning, "Eternal Priesthood," p. 124.

indeed be a difficult duty. Whether we succeed at all in it will depend largely on whether we have learnt rightly to gauge the value of time. "Every hour is valuable in view of the work to be done. Learn, then, how to make profitable use of short spaces of time—half hours, or even quarters. An unavoidable interruption may have cut short an hour arranged for reading; make the most of what remains."¹

Try, at all events, to get, after Ordination, two hours reading in the morning. Do not waste time over the prolonged study of the daily newspaper, or by an excessive love of smoking fritter away the precious hours before one o'clock. Set yourself to read before midday dinner as regularly as you set yourself to visit afterwards, if you would wish to be true to this aspect of the Ordination vow. It is the busiest men, after all, who most often make the best use of scanty opportunities of leisure. Let us learn to imitate them.

¹ Ducat, "Hints to those who are preparing for Holy Orders."

THE PASTORAL SPIRIT.

Spiritus Domini super me, eo quod unxerit Dominus me :
ad annunciandum mansuetis misit me, ut mederer contritis
corde, et prædicarem captivis indulgentiam, et clausis
apertionem :

Ut prædicarem annum placabilem Domino, et diem ultionis
Deo nostro : ut consolarer omnes lugentes.—ISA. lxi. 1, 2.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PASTORAL SPIRIT.

“ I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father : and I lay down My life for the sheep.”—St. JOHN x. 14, 15.

THE preparation for Ordination at length comes to an end, and you find yourself on the very verge of your new life. In a few days you will be ordained ; in a few more you will have begun work in some parish.

It is not within the scope and purpose of this book to enter upon any discussion of the practical duties of a parish priest ; but something may be said in conclusion about the inner spirit which should inspire the newly ordained clergyman at the outset of his work.

We may think of his relation to God, his relation to his brother-clergy, and his relation to the people.

First, there will be your relation to God.

The main thing to remember in this connection, surely, is to make a resolution, which will be constantly renewed as the years pass away, that you will keep up the practices of prayer and devotion which you have learnt to value at a Theological College. "Be a theological student always," was the advice given by a saintly old priest to one who was beginning his clerical life.

You will, then, have your fixed times for prayer, your fixed half-hour for meditation as soon as you can secure it in the morning; and you will make your Communion as often as opportunity allows. You will never intermit saying the Daily Office of the Church; and you will examine yourself night by night as to how far you have fallen short in these duties, and in the habit of recollectedness which they foster.

Do not, however, let it be supposed that all this is easy.

The first danger you will experience will be the loss of those helps on which you have been resting at a Theological College. "As in the launching of a ship, when the stays are knocked away it goes down into the water, thenceforward to depend upon its own

stability, so a priest going out from the seminary into the field of his work, has henceforward to depend, under God, upon his own steadfastness of will. The order, method, and division of time and work; the sound of the bell from early morning through the day till the last toll at night; the example and mutual influence and friendship of companions in the same sacred life; and still more, the mature counsels and wise charity of superiors—all these sustain the watchfulness and perseverance of ecclesiastical students until the day when . . . they go out from the old familiar walls, and the door is closed behind them.”¹

A resolute will to map out your time, to resist the encroachments of social calls, to lean continually upon God as the sense of loneliness presses upon you, is essential, if you would avoid falling into worldliness, sloth, or mere mediocrity.

Then there will be your relation to your brother-clergy and to the vicar. It is possible that you may have had advantages of training which those round about you have not enjoyed. If so, a caution will not be out of place. Resolve at the outset to

¹ Manning's "Eternal Priesthood," p. 77.

strive after humility. You have not come to the parish to teach your vicar; and in every matter that does not involve an important principle it will be your duty to follow the advice and guidance of him as your immediate superior. "Modest, humble, and constant in their Ministration"—this is the keynote of the Diaconate, and surely also of the Priesthood. Put away, then, all tendency to self-assertion and pride; struggle against any desire to lay down the law or to teach as if you knew everything. If you are to make real progress in the priestly life, it can only be by real and continued efforts after humility of heart and a docile spirit.

Thus, your relation to the vicar, or to your brother-clergy, will be a real test to your character in this respect. There will be great need for care, for self-discipline, and for watchfulness. "It is easier to work *for* others than *with* others;"¹ and the reason is that to work with others often makes greater demands on our humility and self-suppression. Let us be sure of this—that if we excel others in any gift we shall have to struggle against pride and love of pre-

¹ The phrase is the Bishop of Lincoln's.

eminence, if others excel us we shall have to struggle against envy and detraction; and this can only be done by loving and praying for those whom we are tempted to envy. The work which we are doing is not ours, nor is it our brethren's work: it is God's work; and He uses us to do it for Him as He sees best.

And then there is your relation to your flock, and in this connection you must strive earnestly for the pastoral spirit.

What does it imply?

(a) Reverence. Reverence your people. "Have always, therefore, printed in your remembrance," says the Ordinal, "how great a *treasure* is committed to your charge. For they are the sheep of Christ, which He bought with His death, and for whom He shed His blood." Avoid, then, any disparaging way of speaking of the people to whom you minister. They know what real life means—its strain, its pathos, its demands—far better than you do at present. The Holy Ghost, too, has been with them before you came to the parish. They are His temples. You will do no good unless you can learn sincerely and heartily to reverence them as souls created in the

image of God, and redeemed by the Blood of Christ, and the objects of His unfailing love.

“I would rather have a curate who came with sympathy for the people, careful and humble in dealing with them, reverencing them and the image of God in them, however uninstructed he might be in the details of parish work, than a man who had everything (including his ideas about the people) cut and dried—a man who knew all the points of ritual, but who did not know that the people he had come to work amongst were his own brothers and sisters, heirs with himself of the Father’s Home on earth and in heaven.”¹

“Honour all men.”² If you look out for it you will always find something to honour in everybody, even in the most degraded; and in the case of grievous sinners we do well to ask ourselves what opportunities they have had compared to ours, and how we should have fared if we had been exposed to similar temptations. Do not despise or think slightingly of any one, least of all of any of

¹ E. T. Lecke, “Ourselves, our People, and our Work,” p. 43. The present writer would wish that all candidates for Holy Orders would read the whole of this admirable little book.

² 1 St. Peter ii. 17.

those amongst whom you work. Reverence them, and the image of God in them; get below the surface; think of the pathos of almost every human life; call up the thought of the Incarnate Son of God, and ask how He would have you deal with this one and that one. If we are to be true pastors, we must be for ever seeking guidance from the Pastor of pastors, Who alone can teach us how to tend His sheep, how to feed His lambs. And what a reverence He had for human life—for the children, for the poor, for the sick, for the outcast, even for the woman taken in adultery!

And as He revered men, so let us. An undertone of deep reverence is not incompatible with a real joyousness and sweetness and hopefulness of manner. Only we must be real. The people will find out if there is anything hollow about us; they will soon detect any unreality or flippancy; they have a high idea, ordinarily, of what a clergyman ought to be. Don't disappoint or distress them by an off-hand manner, or by a thoughtless way of talking or acting.

Remember that you are now their "pastor," their "minister"—a "man of God"—going

in and out among them, bringing them a message from another world.

(*b*) It implies love. After reverence comes love. You must do more than reverence the people, you must love them ; and this love is no mere emotional sentiment. Love means sacrifice, and you must be ready to sacrifice yourself, your ease and convenience and inclination, for those to whom you minister.

Look constantly at our Lord's example, and you will certainly be guided aright. "The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."¹

Be at the disposal of the people ; be accessible ; let them come to you at any time. Do not repel them.

Nicodemus came to Jesus by night—he had not the courage to come by day—and our Lord did not put him off.

Here, then, is our pattern. If the people come to you at inconvenient hours, do not send them away—rather be thankful that they come at all. "Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."² This was St. Paul's motto, and why should it not be ours? We are to be the servants of the people, coming to them, living among them, "not to be minis-

¹ St. John x. 11.

² 2 Cor. iv. 5.

tered unto, but to minister";¹ not "as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock."²

And then there is the duty of pastoral visitation. Love will seek out the object of its love. If we are really to love the people, we must visit them in their own homes. The Good Shepherd says, "I know My sheep, and am known of Mine"; but we cannot get to know our sheep unless we visit them diligently, thoroughly, systematically. There will be the sick and the dying, and those who are in good health. Regular systematic visiting day by day—this is one of the most important and urgent duties and privileges of a true pastor; and we must let nothing short of this satisfy us.

But if we are to rise to this ideal, what a constant warfare must be waged against that insidious spirit of indolence and self-pleasing which will be so ready to creep over us! How constantly we shall have to pray for the spirit of the true pastor, of the "Good Shepherd" who is ready to lay down his life for his sheep!

It will be a sad day for us if ever our

¹ St. Matt. xx. 28.

² 1 St. Peter v. 3.

multiplied services in church, or our constant meetings, or (still worse) work which we undertake outside our own parish, should lead us to neglect regular pastoral visiting; for it will assuredly mean that we have lost our first love, and that we are growing cold in the service of God, in the work of a true pastor.

(c) It implies disinterestedness. Be disinterested. Do not look after only the young and attractive. Care for the old as well as the young. You will sometimes find that the old are scarcely considered enough. While much is being done to attract the young men and young women, the aged are sometimes left out in the cold. In visiting, then, do not neglect the aged. Let them feel that you are living close to God, and then, in spite of your inexperience, you will be able really to help them if you are natural and simple, and filled with Divine love. Let your heart go out to those who have borne the burden and heat of the day, who have passed through the pressure of life before you were born, and who now need to prepare quietly and trustfully for death. If they see that you only care for the young, you will

be missing a great opportunity for usefulness. Be a pastor not to some only, but to all—to the dull and the uninteresting as well as to the attractive, to the old as well as to the young. You can do it if you have the pastoral spirit—the heart of a priest.

(*d*) It implies gentleness and patience. Be very patient. Love is content to wait. We live in a day of excitement and rush, and there is a constant temptation to the clergy to compete with the world—to look everywhere for quick returns, results that can be tabulated and then advertised! It is a great snare. Do not be afraid to be humdrum, to go quietly on year after year in “patient continuance in well doing.” We must be patient with the people, leading them on gently, not with violence; not riding rough shod over prejudices, but by forbearance and tact “commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”¹

How often is good work marred by impatience, and how often is impatience due to the spirit of competition! We do not wish, in matters of ritual or the like, to be behind other churches. But our Lord’s way

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 2.

was to teach men as they were able to bear it, adapting His instructions to the capacity of those who heard Him; and we must do the same in regard to what we teach, to the way in which we teach it, and also in regard to the outward expression of the truth in ceremonial. It is a sign of strength if one can be patient. It is the weak man who is restless and impatient. To be a real pastor of souls, we need to pray constantly for patience. Be "gentle unto all men." ¹

(e) It implies zeal. Though patient, you must be full of zeal—zeal for God and zeal for bringing souls to our Lord. A priest without zeal is a melancholy sight; he soon becomes cynical or superficially pessimistic and unhopeful.

Pray, then, for a real and a sustained love of souls, for steady pastoral zeal, for enthusiasm in God's service, for a self-sacrificing spirit which delights to spend and be spent in the work of the Ministry.

You will find it too often taken for granted that because you have begun well you will, of necessity, persevere to the end. Such, however, is not the case. Certainly it is a

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 24.

great thing to begin with a high ideal, the highest ideal of life and work ; but you will need to pray for perseverance and a continual spirit of self-sacrifice and self-devotion. The natural enthusiasm with which we begin our work will, sooner or later, die down ; and unless we have something stronger than merely natural enthusiasm to fall back upon, we shall fail. The supernatural motive of the love of God, and the love of man for God's sake—in one word, *zeal*—is the only lasting basis for spiritual work.

To go on working year after year ; to be constant in visiting and teaching ; to persevere in season and out of season, though we cannot perceive any tangible results ; to be content to battle on steadily and cheerfully, leaving to others who will come after us the privilege of reaping the fruit of our labour ;—for all this we need zeal and perseverance. The Good Shepherd goes after the lost sheep “until He find it”—it was the persevering zeal of unwearyed love.

We must do the same. A yearly Retreat of three or four days will perhaps do more than anything else in keeping a high ideal before us of constant work, and of persevering

yet restful diligence. Often after a Retreat of a few days—often, too, after a few weeks' holiday—we can begin again with fresh vigour, with new resolutions, with ever-deepening earnestness, with unfailing cheerfulness and hope.

Reverence, love, disinterestedness, patience, zeal! These are the qualities which go to make up the pastoral spirit, which is, after all, the spirit of our blessed Lord Himself, Who said, "I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine." If, then, we would learn to deepen more and more within us this pastoral spirit, it must be by constant meditation on the Ministerial life and work of Him Who "went about doing good," as St. Peter says;¹ Who "pleased not Himself," as St. Paul says;² and Who said Himself, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."³

¹ Acts x. 38.² Rom. xv. 3.³ St. John xiii. 14.

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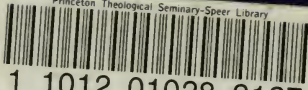
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